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goal! Weekly

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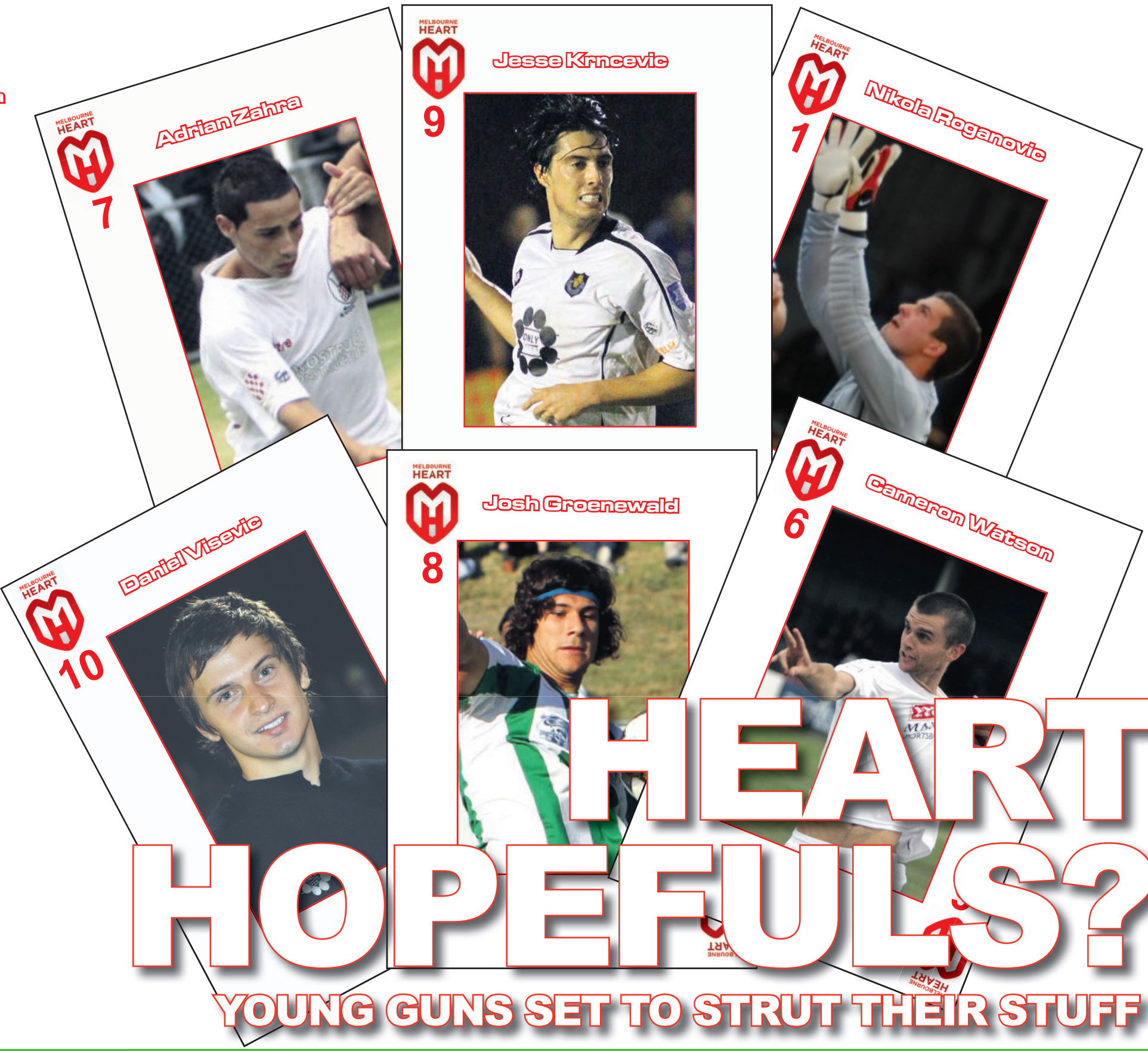

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this week's line-up

Soccer Hotlines	3
Latin Scene	4
Euro Scene	5
Blast From The Past	7
London Calling	12
FFV Results	16
Tasmania	20
NSW	21
Sth Aust	22
West Aust	23
VPL	26

goal! Weekly

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Galanos quits Heart board

By Craig MacKenzie

MANNY Galanos has stepped down from the board of A-League newcomer Melbourne Heart but remains firmly convinced that the franchise will prove to be an unqualified success.

The former Victorian Soccer Federation chairman, inaugural president of Football Federation Victoria and Heart co-founder cited business reasons for his recent decision.

"I run a small boutique commercial real estate business and I simply don't have the capacity to spend time in my business and time with Melbourne Heart," he told Goal! Weekly.

"I made the decision about six weeks ago but I agonised over it for some time. During my 10 years with FFV I had a business partner but he left a few years ago and I took over his equity in the business so the demands on my time increased greatly."

Galanos, Heart chairman Peter Sidwell and the late John Ilhan were the originators of the second Melbourne franchise which has evolved greatly since the trio first committed themselves to the project nearly three years ago.

"From the outset we firmly believed in the concept of a second club in Melbourne. It's the sports-mad capital of Australia isn't it? In fact, some would have you believe that it's the sports capital of the universe," said Galanos.

His departure follows that of recently retired business administrator and former player and coach Michael Lynn, a close personal friend of Galanos and principal advisor to the board.

The current Heart board consists of Sidwell, David Kobritz, Patrick Prendergast, Michael Catalano and Joe Mirabella.

Given that city rival Melbourne Victory has a nine-member board expectations are that Heart will soon announce board additions and there's a strong rumour that the club has been in talks with a high-profile South African businessman.

"I can't really comment on that because I really don't know," said Galanos. "But my expectation is that there will be more equity shareholders involved in time."

Heart CEO Scott Munn also wouldn't comment on the South African rumour but was full of praise for the contribution Galanos has made to the evolving franchise.

"Manny's contribution has been significant," said Munn. "I spoke to him the other day and he remains a strong supporter of the club.

"The board is always looking to add to its core competencies and we are in continuing discussions to build the club at all levels," he added.

Galanos is acutely aware of the problems besetting some A-League franchises but remains optimistic that the league will not only survive but flourish.

"I think that FFA has shown a very positive and mature approach in stepping in to help out these clubs," he said.

"My understanding is that within the next week or so someone will step into the Adelaide fold which is very pleasing."

Galanos also saw the increasing attraction of our clubs to Asian business concerns as a positive sign.

"It's a global game. Look at the EPL and see how many clubs are owned by overseas interests. It's a mark of just how much the game here is maturing that Asian businesspeople are showing an interest in becoming involved."

Two other factors influencing Galanos's upbeat view of the A-League's future are his take on the controversial TV rights issue and Australia's chances of hosting the World Cup finals.

"At the time the TV rights were sold I don't think that there were too many options (other than giving Foxtel exclusivity). I think you'll find that when the rights next come up for negotiation that there will be a part free-to-air component and a part-cable component and my expectation is that the rights will have appreciated considerably.

"I think the World Cup will be the difference. I am absolutely convinced that we will get the World Cup here for 2022. I think the UK will get the 2018 rights but if you look at FIFA's policy in allocating host countries then Australia surely will be the winner.

"We have a safe environment, terrific facilities, strong government backing and Frank Lowy heading the bid. That's a formula for success."

Galanos also thinks that Heart has hit on a formula for success with a strong administration and the most celebrated head coach in the A-League, Canadian-born Dutch international and former Dutch national team assistant coach John Van't Schip.

"Setting-up costs do represent a heavy financial burden but the individuals involved on the board are very successful businessmen with the capacity to put their hands in their pockets for start-up capital.

"It can be scary at times but you have to understand that these people are not going to throw good money after bad. They believe very strongly in the concept of a second Melbourne team, they believe in the A-League and they believe very strongly that Melbourne Heart will be a success.

"I have great expectations of the team, both on the field and off. I think that it is a legitimate expectation that we can be up and challenging for honours in the not-too-distant future."

Former VSF/FFV Chairman Manny Galanos (left) seen here chairing the historic motion of dissolving the VSF and forming the FFV with George Wallace (VSF President) and Tony Pignata (VSF CEO) back in 2005.

Life ban for VPL fans

Last Thursday night the Football Federation Victoria's Tribunal handed down its determination for the incident/s involving the Round 6 Victorian Premier League fixture between South Melbourne FC and Heidelberg United FC at Bob Jane Stadium.

The match was abandoned in the second half after spectators entered the field of play.

South Melbourne FC were charged with four misconduct offences.The Tribunal found them guilty of two of the offences, and have fined South Melbourne FC $3,500.00, and a life ban was handed down to three South Melbourne FC associates.

Heidelberg United FC were charged with two offences, and were found guilty of one. They have been fined $2,000.00 and a life ban given to a Heidelberg United FC club associate.

The Tribunal awarded the fixture to Heidelberg United FC, 3-0. Football Federation Victoria takes a zero-tolerance approach to inappropriate behaviour at all FFV fixtures. The safety of the players, officials and other supporters is paramount, and any behaviour that contradicts this will not be tolerated.

Heidelberg keeper Steve Tilovski picks up a missile thrown on to the pitch at Bob Jane recently. PHOTO: ANITA MILAS

Greens versus Heidelberg postponed due to rain

Friday night's match between Bentleigh Greens and Heidelberg United was posponed due to heavy rain and a waterlogged pitch.

After a pitch inspection by the referee it was deemed the unsafe for the players to take the field and the match will now be played sometime inJune or July on one of the cath-up round weekends.

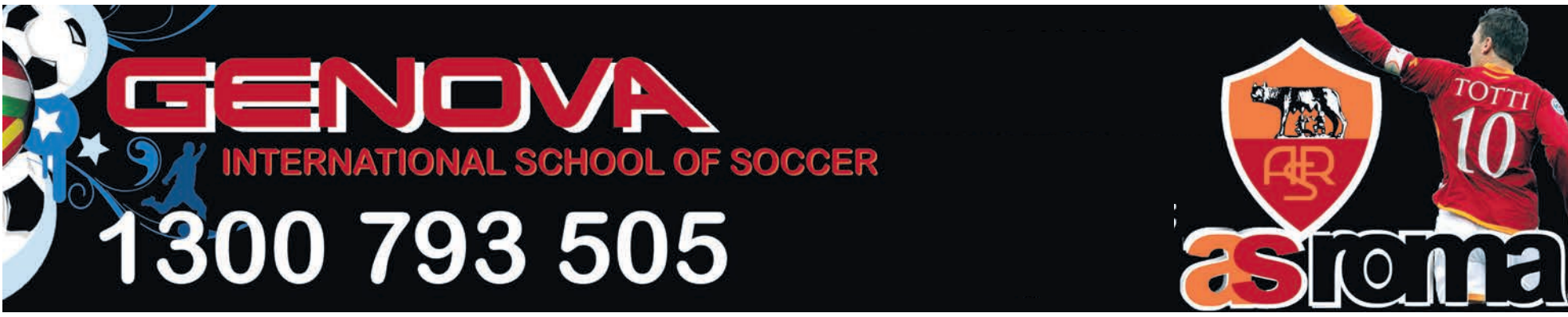
SFC and Nepean link

Hyundai A-League 2010 Champions Sydney FC and the Nepean District Soccer Football Association (NDSFA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will see the two bodies establish formal links and foster grassroots participation in the area.

The centrepiece of the three-year agreement is that Sydney FC will provide every child aged 12 years and under registered with the Nepean association with a FREE Bronze membership to the club.

Sydney FC's Head of Football Stefan Kamasz and Nepean Operations Manager Linda Cerone and Football Manager James Rankine were at Nepean's York Road offices to formalise the landmark agreement that will providing each with a raft of new and far reaching benefits.

The agreement will allow Sydney FC to engage with the thousands of junior registered players in the Nepean District through clinics, player appearances and match day experiences while also offering discounted ticketing and club merchandise.



Heart hopefuls to face Zebras

By Craig MacKenzie

SIX Victorian Premier League players have trained with Melbourne Heart and are expected to take part in Wednesday night's trial game with Whittlesea Zebras at 7pm at Epping Stadium.

The six are 24-year-old Serbian-born goalkeeper Nikola Roganovic and Green Gully teammate, midfielder Josh Groenewald; attacking Richmond duo Daniel Visevic and Jesse Krncevic; Oakleigh midfielder Cameron Watson and Melbourne Knights attacking midfielder Adrian Zahra.

"The co-operation we've received from the VPL clubs has been fantastic and we're very appreciative of that," said Heart General Manager of Football Operations, John Didulica.

Last Friday the club formally announced that it had sealed deals with Altona Magic's Kliment Taseski, and Australian Institute of Sport duo Eli Babalj and Brendan Hamill.

Taseski's anticipated signing was one of the worst kept secrets of the past few months after the teenager left Melbourne Victory's youth squad before Christmas.

All three have signed multi-year deals and take Heart's confirmed signings to 13. Other members of the first team squad are Kristian Sarkies, Dean Heffernan, Matt Thompson, Jason Hoffman, Kamal Ibrahim, Simon Colosimo, Clint Bolton, John Aloisi, Rutger Worm and Wayne Srhoj.

Babalj, 18, is a 189cm striker whose nine goals made him the leading AIS scorer in the recently completed national youth league.

Hamill, 17, is the youngest player on the Heart playing roster. The Young Socceroo defender shunned overtures from English Premier League clubs opting to have his development fast-tracked at the new Melbourne franchise.

Former Socceroo midfield ace Josip Skoko, whose career kicked off with North Geelong, remains firmly on Heart's radar and prizing him away from Croatian giant Hajduk Split would be a massive coup.

Heart also has secured the services of South Melbourne custodian Peter Zois as goalkeeping coach. Zois is an ex-South junior who joined Cardiff City for the 1997–98 season before embarking on a 10-year stint as a professional in Holland with NAC Breda and Willem II Tillburg.

Zois joined Souths from Richmond for the start of the current VPL season and his appointment at Heart has fuelled speculation that the club will register him as a back-up keeper.

"Peter is not at the club to be a goalkeeper. He's at the club to be a coach," said Didulica.

Heart's plan to host a free open training session at AAMI Stadium this Friday night had been put on hold as we went to press. The club intended to give all football fans the chance to watch the team train and meet with the players and coaching staff after the session.

Free tours of the new stadium also were planned for the occasion to allow fans to get a feel for what is sure to be one of the premier football venues in the country.

Heart remains in negotiations with the stadium management over a tenancy deal but is confident that they will be completed shortly.

"Negotiations are ongoing but we hope to sign off on them in the next few weeks," said Heart CEO Scott Munn.

The club is delighted with the partnership deal struck a fortnight ago with Latrobe University, setting up a training and interim administrative base at the campus in the northern Melbourne suburb of Bundoora.

The deal gives Heart access to the university's playing fields and sports and medical centre for two years.

The football pitches and surrounding administrative facilities will be upgraded to FIFA standard and once completed will house 30 full-time club employees including coaches, medical and support staff.

Melbourne Knights' Heart hopeful Adrian Zahra in action against Dandenong Thunder earlier this season. PHOTO:STEVE STAREK

Vidmar's Helping Han?

The Football Federation of Australia are believed to be about to announce that two A league coaches will be accompanying Pim Verbeek to South Africa to increase their exposure to coaching at the highest level. One of these coaches is believed to be Adelaide United's Aurelio Vidmar.

Following the World Cup, the FFA are expected to announce that Technical Director Han Berger will be the coach of the Socceroos at the Asia Cup and dependent on the teams performance at the tournament in the immediate future thereafter.

Aurelio Vidmar who has been earmarked a possible future Socceroos' coach for a while now, is tipped to leave Adelaide United to become his assistant.

This would leave the position at Adelaide vacant, and as much as Phil Stubbins, Vidmar's assistant would want the job along with Joe Mullen it is believed that Adelaide raised Perth Glory coach Dave Mitchell is being lined up by the new owners to take over. Mitchell is only on a one-year deal at Perth Glory, and would no doubt welcome a longer contract back in his hometown.

Mitchell is currently in Sydney on holiday and is believed to be selling his house, which has fanned the flames of a possible move to Adelaide.

-GORDON BENNETT

Aurelio Vidmar

Socceroos drawn in Group C for AFC Asian Cup 2011

The Qantas Socceroos have been placed alongside Bahrain, India and the Korea Republic in Group C of the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2011 following Sarurday's draw at the Aspire Dome in Doha.

The Qantas Socceroos were seeded in the second tier of teams for the tournament and were placed in the C3 position of the groups.

FFA National Technical Director Han Berger, who was in Doha for the draw, described the Qantas Socceroos draw as "interesting".

"It's an interesting group. But then, all groups are interesting. Nobody will have it easy at the Finals. Australia will have to deliver consistently to excel in the tournament," said Berger.

"Korea Republic are one of the strongest sides in the continent and have been regularly featuring in the World Cup finals since 1986. They'll be a strong opponent.

"Then there's Bahrain. We played a few times against the Gulf nation during the 2010 Asian Zone World Cup qualification and it was never easy. They too will raise a strong challenge.

"India are newcomers. Frankly speaking, we don't know much about them. But they've qualified for the tournament by winning the 2008 AFC Challenge Cup and that shows that they too are capable of playing at this level. We look forward to the finals in Qatar and want to better our record this time around," concluded Berger.

The Qantas Socceroos will face India in their opening match, followed by the Korea Republic with their final group match against Bahrain.

The Qantas Socceroos have played India at senior men's international level on seven occasions and last played each other back in 1956 in a friendly match in Sydney following the Melbourne Olympic Games.

The Qantas Socceroos are undefeated against Bahrain having beaten the Gulf Nation twice during the recent 2010 FIFA World Cup Asian Qualification stage and twice during the AFC Asian Cup 2007 Qualifiers.

The Qantas Socceroos have faced the Korea Republic in 23 fixtures including their most recent friendly match in Seoul last year where the hosts won 3-1.

Host Nation Qatar will face Uzbekistan in the opening match of the tournament on the 7th January.

FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

Botafogo clinches Rio state title

Botafogo won the Rio de Janeiro state title on Sunday after beating Flamengo 2-1 with goals by Argentine striker German Herrera and Uruguay forward Sebastian "El Loco" Abreu. In the Sao Paulo state tournament, Neymar scored twice to help Santos beat Sao Paulo 3-0 and advance to the final of the traditional competition.

Botafogo had already won the Guanabara Cup, the first stage of the Rio competition, and automatically clinched the overall title by winning the Rio Cup, the second stage.

The victory in front of more than 50,000 fans at Maracana stadium gave Botafogo—led by former South Africa coach Joel Santana—its first state title since 2006, and ended a streak of three consecutive runner-up finishes to Flamengo in the Rio championship.

"The party is on, it's time to celebrate," Santana said. "Enough was enough. These players will go down in history after this victory."

Herrera converted a penalty in the 23rd minute after a Botafogo player had been pulled down inside the area from a corner. Flamengo equalized through striker Vagner Love just before halftime from a cross into the box. Adriano—returning to action after missing four matches because of a back muscle injury—headed the ball toward the goal and Love tapped it into the open net from close range.

Abreu scored the winner for Botafogo in the 73rd with another penalty after Herrera had been pushed by Chilean midfielder Claudio Maldonado inside the area. Maldonado received his second yellow card in the play and was sent off. Flamengo goalkeeper Bruno dived to his left and Abreu's shot hit the crossbar—before falling just across the line. Flamengo had a chance to equalize again when it received a penalty in the 79th, but Adriano's low shot from the spot was saved by goalkeeper Jefferson. "I have to keep my head up, there is nothing else I can do right now," Adriano said. Herrera was sent off after the penalty for complaining with the referee.

Flamengo had to beat Botafogo in Sunday's Rio Cup final to earn the right to face Botafogo again in a two-legged state final. The winners of each stage in Rio face off for the overall title, unless a team wins both stages. No team had won both the Guanabara and the Rio Cups since Vasco da Gama in 1998. Flamengo, the defending Brazilian champion, won the previous three Rio titles in finals against Botafogo, which clinched its 19th state title on Sunday. Flamengo is the most successful Rio champion with 31 titles.

Botafogo players get into the party mood after winning their first Rio state title since 2006.

COPA LIBERTADORES

Defending champion Estudiantes of Argentina will play at Mexican club San Luis in the round of 16 of the Copa Libertadores. The governing body of South American football released the first-leg pairings on Friday. The dates of the second-leg matches are expected to be announced next week.

On Tuesday it's: San Luis vs. Estudiantes and Mexican club Chivas vs. Velez Sarsfield of Argentina. Three matches are set are set for Wednesday: Universitario of Peru vs. Sao Paulo of Brazil; Flamengo of Brazil vs. Corinthians of Brazil; Banfield of Argentina vs. Internacional of Brazil.

On Thursday, it's: Cruzeiro of Brazil vs. Nacional of Uruguay; Alianza Lima of Peru vs. Universidad of Chile; Once Caldas of Colombia vs. Libertad of Paraguay. Corinthians will face Flamengo in the first knockout round of the Libertadores Cup after their fellow Brazilians scraped in as one of the best group runners-up.

Flamengo, who finished second to Universidad de Chile in Group Eight on Wednesday, had to wait 24 hours to find out if they were amoing the six best runners-up in the eight groups. Another Brazilian side, Internacional of Porto Alegre, beat Deportivo Quito 3-0 at home in Porto Alegre on Thursday to reach the knockout phase as Group Five winners. Midfielder Andrezinho opened the scoring in the fourth minute from a corner, defender Bolivar added a second after an hour and Giuliano completed the win in stoppage time. Inter substitute Edu was sent off two minutes from time.

Corinthians, who secured top place in Group One last week, beat Colombian champions Independiente Medellin 1-0 in Sao Paulo with a Juan Valencia own goal to amass 16 points from their six matches, the best record in the group phase. With former Brazil World Cup winners Ronaldo and Roberto Carlos in their squad, they hope to mark the club's centenary year with their first South American crown.

Two more Brazilian sides, last-year's runners-up Cruzeiro and three times champions Sao Paulo, also reached the last 16 among the six best second-placed teams to take the country's total to five qualifiers. Two spots were reserved for Mexico's Guadalajara and San Luis, who were given a bye into this year's knockout phase having had to pull out in 2009 due to the H1N1 epidemic. They have been pitted against Argentine opponents with San Luis facing holders and Group Three winners Estudiantes and Guadalajara meeting Velez Sarsfield, who topped Group Seven.

In other ties, Universidad de Chile face Alianza Lima in the week after drawing goalless with rival Universidad Católica in Santiago and whom face fierce archrival Colo-Colo on Sunday in the domestic front whom have signed new coach Diego Cagna, another Argentine from Tigre. The former Boca Juniors midfielder will take the reign over former under-20 Argentine national team youth maestro Hugo Tocalli after a disappointing first half to the season as defending champions and early elimination from the group stage in the Copa Libertadores.

Sao Paulo meet Peruvian champions Universitario, Paraguay's Libertad face Once Caldas of Colombia, Uruguay's Nacional play Cruzeiro in a clash of titans from neighbours Brazil and Uruguay while the other southern Brazilian side Internacional of Porto Alegre with Argentine Andrés D'Alessandro leading in attack clash with Argentine champions Banfield. The matches will be played over the next two weeks with the quarter-finals scheduled in May before the competition goes into recess for the World Cup in South Africa.

Juan Sebastián Verón scored in stoppage time to give defending champion Estudiantes de La Plata of Argentina a 1-0 win over Alianza Lima to take top spot in Group 3 of the Copa Libertadores. Alianza and Estudiantes had already qualified for the knockout round as the top two teams in their group. Bolivar of Bolivia beat Juan Aurich of Peru 2-0 the other Group 3 match. Neither had any chance of qualifying.

Verón scored the winning goal for Estudiantes with almost the final touch of the match after Hector Vidal Sosa committed a handball in the box. Alianza goalkeeper George Forsyth saved Veron's penalty, but the ball rebounded to the former Manchester United midfielder and he tapped into the empty net. Alianza finished with 10 men after Walter Vilchez was sent off just before the goal.

The ten clubs now assured of places in the last 16 stage are; Corinthians and Cruzeiro of Brazil, Universidad de Chile, Colombia's Once Caldas, Paraguay's Libertad, Alianza Lima of Peru, Argentine clubs Velez Sarsfield and Estudiantes plus Mexico's San Luis and Chivas of Guadalajara.

San Luis and Guadalajara skipped the group stage and were given places directly in the last 16 after being forced to pull out at the same stage last year because of the swine flu outbreak in Mexico. The remaining berths in the last 16 will be decided Wednesday and Thursday. The knockout round begins next month. This year, the Libertadores will take a break after the quarterfinals to make way for the World Cup. The semifinals and final will conclude in July and August.

BRAZIL

Brazilian club Flamengo has dismissed coach Jorge Luis Andrade after a disappointing run in the Rio de Janeiro state championship and the Copa Libertadores. Flamengo reached the final 16 of the Copa Libertadores, but only as one of the best second-place teams as mentioned, the club fell 2-1 to Botafogo, a victory that gave Botafogo the Rio state title. Club president Patricia Amorim announced the move on Friday. She said Maros Braz, the vice president of football, and club director Eduardo Manhaes were also leaving. An early front-runner to take the job is Botafogo coach Joel Santana, the former coach of the South Africa national team. Fans may not like the move however.

In the Sao Paulo tournament, the 18-year-old Neymar extended his streak of impressive performances by helping Santos defeat Sao Paulo 3-0 in the second leg of the semifinals at Vila Belmiro stadium in Santos. Neymar opened the scoring from close range in the 59th and added a penalty in the 83rd. Playmaker Paulo Henrique Ganso sealed the victory with an 87th-minute goal. Santos is trying to win its first state title since 2007, while Sao Paulo hasn't won the tournament since 2005. Corinthians, the defending champion and the most successful team in the competition, failed to reach the semifinals despite having striker Ronaldo and veteran left back Roberto Carlos in the team.

The team made famous by Pele in the 1960s had already beaten Sao Paulo 3-2 in the first leg last week at Morumbi stadium in Sao Paulo and could have advanced to the final even if it had lost by one goal. With Neymar in great form and with the help of Brazil striker Robinho, Santos has scored 93 goals in 27 matches this season, including 56 goals in its last 11 games. Santos will play the final against Santo Andre, which advanced despite a 2-1 loss to Gremio Prudente in Santo Andre. The team from the suburbs of Sao Paulo had won the first match by 2-1 but advanced because it had a better campaign in the first stage.

In the Rio Grande do Sul state championship, Argentine midfielder Andres D'Alessandro scored a late goal to give Internacional a 3-2 win over Pelotas and the title of the competition's second stage. Inter, led by Uruguay coach Jorge Fossati, will play in the state final against rival Gremio, the first stage's winner.

ARGENTINA

Estudiantes went back to the top of the standings in Argentina's Clausura tournament, with Facundo Quiroga's 21st minute own goal enough for a 1-0 win over River Plate. Quiroga—formerly of Wolfsburg, Napoli and Sporting Lisbon—attempted a clearance of a cross by Enzo Perez but it looped over the goalkeeper and into the net. The victory improved Estudiantes to 33 points, two ahead of Godoy Cruz and Independiente. Argentinos Juniors is four points back but had a game in hand. It was Estudiantes' fourth straight victory with three rounds remaining.

Independiente drew 0-0 at Hurucan and Godoy Cruz defeated Chacarita 1-0 on Friday. In Friday's other result, Velez Sarsfield defeated Tigre 1-0. In other Saturday matches, Lanus downed Arsenal 4-1 and Newell's Old Boys trounced Colon 5-0. Defender Santiago Hoyos, Paraguayan striker Santiago Salcedo, Leonardo Diaz and Javier Carrasco scored in Lanus' 4-1 rout of Arsenal. Luciano Leguizamon scored for Arsenal, which finished with 10 men. Newell's had a goal feast with two from Joaquin Boghossian and others from Mauricio Sperdutti, Mauro Formica and Jorge Achucarro.

In last week's action, Marco Perez scored with an amazing overhead kick to give relegation-threatened Gimnasia La Plata a 1-0 home win over Boca Juniors in the Argentine Clausura tournament on Sunday. San Lorenzo had a 3-0 win over local rivals Huracan, while the match between Rosario Central and Newell's Old Boys finished 1-1. Racing Club came from behind to beat Velez Sarsfield 3-1 in the day's final match. Estudiantes La Plata and Independiente lead the standings with 30 points from 15 matches, though Argentinos Juniors can go to the top if they win at Arsenal de Sarandi on Monday.

Boca, enduring one of the worst seasons in its history, is still without an away win in the Clausura tournament after Perez volleyed the winning goal for Gimnasia in the 59th minute. Another turbulent week for Boca started with a 4-0 victory over Arsenal on Monday in Roberto Pompei's first match as manager since replacing the sacked Abel Alves. Further evidence of the rift between star players Juan Roman Riquelme and Martin Palermo surfaced later in the week, souring the preparations for the match with Gimnasia. Palermo played, but Riquelme missed the match with a knee injury and Boca's attack looked limp without the playmaker's promptings. The win for Gimnasia helped move the club away from the automatic drop zone in the table of average points used to decide relegation.

Elsewhere, Alejandro Gomez opened the scoring for San Lorenzo against Huracan with a right-footed shot in the 22nd minute. Fabian Bordagaray rounded the keeper to score the second in the 70th minute and Cristian Leiva finished the scoring with a lob in the 73rd.

In the Rosario derby played last week between Central and Newell's, both teams ended the match with nine players. Diego Braghieri gave Central the lead from close range following a corner in the third minute, but Nahuel Valentini fouled Cristian Nunez in the box and Rolando Schiavi equalized for Newell's from the 17th-minute penalty. Central's Mario Paglialunga and Valentini were sent off, as were Lucas Bernardi and Nunez of Newell's, but neither side could use the extra space to find a winning goal.

Therefore the results for last week were: Chacarita Juniors 1, Atletico Tucuman 2; Tigre 1, Estudiantes 2; Banfield 1, Independiente 3; River Plate 2, Godoy Cruz 1.

Late goals fire United to the summit

ENGLAND:

A Ryan Giggs penalty double has helped Manchester United to overcome Tottenham Hotspur 3-1 at Old Trafford on Saturday, despite the late withdrawal of star striker Wayne Rooney due to a groin injury. The win resulted in the 18-time champions taking the summit of the Premier League from Chelsea for 24-hours yet again in a frantic title race.

Ryan Giggs opened the scoring in the 58th minute when Benoit Assou-Ekotto brought down Patrice Evra in the box. Despite a slight touch from Gomes, the United legend put his team ahead as he calmly slotted the penalty into the bottom left corner.

However, the game was far from over as a Gareth Bale corner with twenty minutes to play was met on the head by Spurs captain Ledley King. The much needed goal put the teams level.

With eleven minutes remaining, Federico Marcheda came on and in the 80th minute, the super-sub put through a superb through ball to Portuguese winger Nani who met it and crisply chipped the ball over the head of an incoming Gomes to put United ahead.

United sealed the win in the 86th with the second penalty of the match as Wilson Palacios brought down Nani in the box. Subsequently, Ryan Giggs once again stepped up to the spot and coolly slotted the ball into the bottom right corner past Gomes to seal the win for United.

West Ham United moved six points clear of the relegation zone, beating Wigan Athletic 3-2 at Upton Park thanks to a Scott Parker late winner. Wigan scored the opener four minutes in thanks to an own goal from Johnathan Spector off a Ben Watson corner. However, two goals for West Ham from Illan and Kovac in the last fourteen minutes of the first half put them ahead at the break. Rodallega brought Wigan back into contention with a 52nd minute equaliser off yet another Watson corner, but nothing could stop the Hammers at their home ground as Scott Parker netted a long range winner in the 77th minute.

In other overnight matches Sunderland overcame Hull City away 1-0, with a bizarre double red card incident involving Altidore for Hull and Hutton for Sunderland. Darren bent netted the solitary winner seven minutes in; his 25th goal of the season. Jimmy Bullard had the chance to level, but hit the post in the 41st minute.

Both sides went into half-time win ten men as an off the ball incident between Jozy Altidore and Alan Hutton resulted in the double red. Arsenal and Manchester City saw out a 0-0 draw at Emirates Stadium in an uneventful match which saw Shay Given came off the park with a suspected shoulder injury in the 73rd. City see themselves one point behind fourth placed Spurs. The Gunners hold third spot, eight clear of Spurs. Bolton and Portsmouth saw out a 2-2 draw, as did Wolves and Blackburn see out a 1-1 fixture.

Ryan Giggs scores his first EPL penalty and helps put the Red Devils on top of the standings for another 24 hours. The leadership in England has changed no less than 20 times this year.

SPAIN:

Barcelona and Real Madrid both produced comfortable wins to reinforce their dominance over other La Liga sides, but the title race continues between the El Classico rivals.

Barcelona got back to winning ways despite a 3-1 away defeat to Inter Milan in the Champions League mid-week with a 3-1 over Xerez at the Nou Camp. First-half goals from Suarez in the 14th and Henry in the 24th saw Barca dominant, but in the 25th Xerez hit back through Bermejo, seeing them into half time with all to play. Zlatan Ibrahimovic put the match beyond doubt in the 56th as the woes for Xerez continue.

Two stoppage time red cards for the visitors for Orellana and Alustiza made the loss all the more sour. Xerez remain at the bottom of La Liga, two points behind Valladolid in their fight to avoid relegation. Barcelona's win keeps them a point clear of Real Madrid atop the table.

Real Madrid saw out a hard fought 2-1 win away to Zaragoza, despite a goalless first half. Raul scored five minutes in to the second half which was followed by a straight red card for Zaragoza's Contini two minutes later.

Real failed to utilise the man advantage to the full, and Colunga equalised for the home side in the 61st minute. The game looked set to see a draw, but a Kaka goal in the 82nd saw the visitors take all three points and stay in contention for the La Liga title, one point adrift of Barcelona in second.

In the third and final match overnight, Valencia saw out a 1-0 home win over Deportivo la Corona thanks to a David Villa penalty. In an uneventful match, Valencia's Baraja saw two yellow cards in stoppage time and was given his marching orders. The win keeps Valencia in third spot, five points clear of Mallorca and in high contention for the Champions League next season.

ITALY

Inter Milan saw another solid win, with a 3-1 triumph over Atalanta at the San Siro last night, but the only other game last night saw AC Milan go down to Palermo away 3-1.

A goal to Tribocchi in the first five for Atalanta stunned the home side but Diego Milito equalised in the 24th to silence the away crowd.

Ten before the break, Mariga put last year's champions ahead and following a goalless half hour; Chivu scored the sealer for Inter thirteen from time, helping them two points clear of Roma atop the table, who still have to play this week.

Palermo's upset over AC Milan put them three points closer to the third placed side. Goals from Bovo, Hernandez and Miccoli helped them see the possibility of a third placed finish from Milan with three games to play. Clarence Seedorf scored the solitary goal for Milan.

FRANCE

A 1-0 loss for last year's champions Bordeaux to Lorient saw them lose even more touch with the Champions League spot as they sit in sixth position.

A solitary goal from Gameiro put the home side within four points of Bordeaux. In other matches, Lille were too good away for Le Mans, winning 2-1,

Nancy saw out a nil-all draw with Montpellier, Nice defeated Grenoble 2-1 at home, Boulogne smashed Sochaux 3-0 at away and Paris Saint-Germain drew 1-1 with Rennes.

Inter Milan´s midfielder Dejan Stankovic (R) challenges Atalanta ´s midfielder Cristiano Doni.

EPL

	P	GD	PTS
1 Man Utd	36	53	79
2 Chelsea	35	54	77
3 Arsenal	36	39	72
4 Tottenham	35	26	64
5 Man City	35	27	63
6 Aston Villa	35	15	61
7 Liverpool	35	24	59
8 Everton	35	9	54
9 Birmingham	35	-8	47
10 Sunderland	36	-6	44
11 Blackburn	36	-16	44
12 Fulham	34	-2	43
13 Stoke	34	-4	43
14 Bolton	36	-25	36
15 Wolves	36	-23	35
16 Wigan	36	-34	35
17 West Ham	36	-18	34
18 Hull	36	-41	28
19 Burnley	35	-37	27
20 Portsmouth	36	-33	16

Arsenal 0-0 Man City
Bolton 2-2 Portsmouth
Hull 0-1 Sunderland
Man Utd 3-1 Tottenham
West Ham 3-2 Wigan
Wolves 1-1 Blackburn

SPL

	P	GD	PTS
1 Rangers	34	53	80
2 Celtic	34	28	69
3 Dundee Utd	34	13	62
4 Motherwell	35	2	51
5 Hibernian	34	3	50
6 Hearts	35	-11	44
7 St Johnstone	35	-4	43
8 Hamilton	35	-10	42
9 Aberdeen	35	-14	38
10 St Mirren	35	-12	32
11 Kilmarnock	35	-22	29
12 Falkirk	35	-26	28

Falkirk 0-1 Hamilton
Hearts 0-2 Motherwell
St Johnstone 1-1 Aberdeen
St Mirren 1-0 Kilmarnock

SERIE A

	P	GD	PTS
1 Inter Milan	35	37	73
2 Roma	34	24	71
3 AC Milan	35	18	64
4 Palermo	35	10	58
5 Sampdoria	34	4	57
6 Napoli	34	5	52
7 Juventus	34	0	51
8 Genoa	34	0	48
9 Parma	34	-7	46
10 Fiorentina	34	6	46
11 Bari	34	-2	43
12 Chievo	34	-3	41
13 Cagliari	34	-1	41
14 Catania	34	0	40
15 Udinese	34	-6	39
16 Lazio	34	-6	37
17 Bologna	34	-14	36
18 Atalanta	35	-13	34
19 Siena	34	-22	30
20 Livorno	34	-30	26

Inter Milan 3-1 Atalanta
Palermo 3-1 AC Milan

BUNDESLIGA

	P	GD	PTS
1 Bayern Munich	32	37	64
2 Schalke 04	32	24	64
3 Werder Bremen	32	29	57
4 Bayer Leverkusen	32	24	57
5 Borussia Dortmund	32	14	56
6 VfB Stuttgart	32	10	53
7 Hamburg	31	15	48
8 Wolfsburg	31	5	46
9 Eintracht Frankfurt	32	-4	46
10 Mainz	32	-6	45
11 Borussia M'gladbach	32	-12	38
12 Cologne	32	-8	37
13 TSG Hoffenheim	31	-3	35
14 Nuremberg	32	-23	28
15 VfL Bochum	32	-26	28
16 SC Freiburg	31	-27	28
17 Hannover 96	32	-32	27
18 Hertha Berlin	32	-20	23

Bayer Leverkusen 3-0 Hannover 96
Borussia M'gladbach 1-1 Bayern Munich
Mainz 3-3 Eintracht Frankfurt
Nuremberg 2-3 Borussia Dortmund
Werder Bremen 1-0 Cologne
VfL Bochum 0-2 VfB Stuttgart

LA LIGA

	P	GD	PTS
1 Barcelona	34	63	87
2 Real Madrid	34	59	86
3 Valencia	34	16	62
4 Mallorca	33	15	55
5 Sevilla	33	11	54
6 Villarreal	33	3	49
7 Athletic Bilbao	33	1	49
8 Getafe	33	5	47
9 Deportivo	34	-10	44
10 Atletico Madrid	33	-3	40
11 Osasuna	33	-9	38
12 Almeria	33	-11	38
13 Espanyol	33	-14	38
14 Sporting Gijon	33	-11	37
15 Racing	33	-12	36
16 Real Zaragoza	34	-19	34
17 Malaga	33	-5	33
18 Tenerife	33	-29	32
19 Valladolid	33	-22	29
20 Xerez	34	-28	27

Barcelona 3-1 Xerez
Real Zaragoza 1-2 Real Madrid
Valencia 1-0 Deportivo La Coruna

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Serbia

Partizan has gone to the top of the league after rivals Red Star lost to Javor. The black and whites are now four points in front of the red and whites who face Hajduk in the remaining game.

Partizan didnt have much trouble getting passed Metalac winning 3:1. Brazilian Cleo scored a brace and Senegalese international Lamine Diarra added the third. Partizan have been given a breath of fresh air by their new coach the young Aleksandar Stanojevic who promises the club will take out the league for the third time in three years.

Javor couldn't back up their win against Red Star as they fell at home to OFK Beograd, Markovic scored early in the game to give OFK the valuable three points. Spartak defeated Rad with the same scoreline while Borac also won 1:0 overcoming Mladi Radnik.

The points where shared between relegation strugellers BSK and Napredak. Vojvodina had an easy afternoon thrashing Jagodina 4:1. Plech, Mrdja, Djurovski and Tadic all found themselves on the scoresheet for the Cup finalists.

After next week the country's two best teams will face off in what will be the title decider. The title race has not been this close in years.

Croatia

Dinamo Zagreb will have to wait to be crowned champions once more after they loss in Vinkovci against Cibalia by 2:0. Kresinger and Baraban gave the homeside the three points and dealt another blow to Dinamo.

Hajduk will thank their Bosnian International Senad Ibricic yet again as he scored the only goal in the clubs home win against Karlovac. Igor Stimac's Zagreb won against Medjimurje in a relegation battle thriller 2:1 whic puts Zagreb one point ahead of their opponents and closer the securing their First Division status.

In midweek cup action Ibricic gave Hajduk a slender lead over Sibenik after scoring late on to give the Split side a 2:1 lead going into the second leg. Ticinovic opened the scoring for the homeside but a Zec penalty levelled proceedings before Ibro gave the whites a 2:1 advantage with two minutes remaining.

Bosnia

There was massive crowd violance in the midweek clash between Sarajevo and Siroki Brijeg.

Sarajevo supporters invaded their own pitch and started demolishing everything around them which sparked security to intervene but with no luck. No one knows what sparked the pitch invasion which led to 40 injured people. The game ended 1:1.

Zeljeznicar a three points ahead of Borac after an easy win against Modrica. Borac have a game in hand as they take on Travnik.

SERBIA

	P	GD	Pts
1. Partizan	26	51:14	66
2. Crvena zvezda	25	46:13	62
3. OFK Beograd	26	36:28	46
4. Spartak	26	31:22	45
5. Vojvodina	26	41:26	40
6. Jagodina	26	32:30	36
7. Javor	26	19:19	35
8. Metalac	26	21:30	34
9. Borac	26	19:31	31
10. Smederevo	25	21:26	29
11. Rad	26	30:35	28
12. Hajduk	25	23:35	25
13. Napredak	26	25:32	25
14. Cukaricki	25	20:41	24
15. BSK	26	20:35	23
16. Mladi radnik	26	17:35	22

BOSNIA

	P	Pts
1 FK Zeljeznicar	25	23 50
2 Borac Banja Luka	24	12 47
3 NK Siroki Brijeg	24	12 39
4 NK Zrinjski	24	10 39
5 FK Sarajevo	24	9 39
6 FK Velez	24	14 37
7 FK Leotar	25	-7 37
8 FK Olimpik Sarajevo	24	-7 32
9 FK Rudar Prijedor	25	-4 31
10 NK Travnik	24	-4 30
11 Zvijezda Gradacac	24	-12 30
12 FK Sloboda Tuzla	25	-12 30
13 NK Celik	25	-4 29
14 Slavija Sarajevo	24	-6 29
15 FK Laktasi	24	-7 25
16 FK Modrica	25	-17 24

CROATIA

	P	GD	Pts
1 Dinamo	27	+51	60
2 Hajduk	27	+23	51
3 Cibalia	27	+21	51
4 Karlovac	27	+11	45
5 Šibenik	27	-2	44
6 Osijek	27	+12	43
7 Slaven Belupo	27	0	41
8 Lokomotiva	27	-1	40
9 Rijeka	27	+5	36
10 Inter Zaprešic	27	-12	30
11 Zadar	27	-14	30
12 Varteks	27	-9	29
13 Istra 1961	27	-13	28
14 Zagreb	27	-9	27
15 Medimurje	27	-23	26
16 Croatia Sesvete	27	-40	14

Right: Cleao netted a double.

Inset: Dinamo staff will have to wait another week.

NRL ROUND 7
Manly Sea Eagles v Gold Coast Titans
Brookvale Oval
Monday, 7:00PM AEST

Match odds
Eagles: 1.34 betfair
Titans: 3.80 betfair

Half time / normal time double - *Sportingbet*

Eagles / Eagles:	1.62
Eagles / Titans:	9.90
Titans / Eagles:	7.50
Titans / Titans:	5.50
Any other result:	9.90

Last played: Eagles 38 def. Titans 4 – 05/09/2009 @ Brookvale Oval, Sydney, NSW.

Head to Head – This ground: Eagles 3 – Titans 0

Last 10 Games – Eagles: W4, W2, W34, L28, L4, L4, W24, W8, W28, W2

Last 10 Games – Titans: W12, L34, L8, L25, W6, W1, W20, L14, W4, L13

The Sea Eagles stamped themselves as genuine premiership contenders when they held on for a gusty 18-16 win over the Mellbourne Storm at Etihad Stadium last Monday night. The win elevated Manly into a logjam of six teams on eight points, two behind the dragons.

The Titans got a reality check on the Gold Coast in round six, crashing 19-6 to the Dragons.

To rub salt into the wound, dual international player Matt Rogers hyper extended his left knee as the contested a kick with Jamie Soward. Coach John Cartright must now decide how to fill the hole left on the Titans' left side.

Manly back at home will be hard to hold out, and the Titans are still a risk away from Skilled Park.

Take Manly Sea Eagles to be in front at half time and normal time - 1.62 Sportingbet – in a multi.

AFL ROUND 5
Carlton v Geelong
MCG
Monday, 2:10PM AEST

Match Odds
Carlton: 5.10 betfair
Geelong: 1.23 betfair

Half time / Normal time double – *Sportingbet*

Carlton / Carlton:	8.50
Carlton / Geelong:	7.00
Geelong / Carlton:	12
Geelong / Geelong:	1.33
Any other result:	21

First half margin – Sportingbet

Carlton 1-12	6.50
Carlton 13-24	12
Carlton 25-36	26
Carlton 37+	51
Geelong 1-12	6.50
Geelong 13-24	5.00
Geelong 25-36	4.25
Geelong 37+	4.00
Scores Level	31

Last Played: Carlton 97 def. Geelong 62 – 07/08/2009

Head to head – this ground: Carlton 3 – Geelong 2

Last 10: Carlton 3 – Geelong 7

Carlton last 10 played: W10, W35, W54, W57, L72, L7, W56, L19, L20, W48

Geelong last 10 played: W5, L14, W40, W14, W73, W12, W31, W9, L7, W95

Carlton comfortably accounted for Adelaide last week with Chris Judd dominating – 30 possessions and nine tackles. Geelong had an even easier time, smashing Port Adelaide by 95 points.

The should be an entertaining battle in the midfield as Judd, Marc Murphy and Bryce Gibbs go head to head with Gary Ablett, Jimmy Bartel and Joel Selwood. Last time it was the Carlton midfield that got the job done as the Blues ended a five-game losing streak against the Cats with a 35-point win late in the season.

Geelong should be too strong here against Carton but the Blues will be in it for a long way. Take Geelong to be in front at half time by 1-12 pts and 13-24 points.

BET RESPONSIBLY

A betting combo of the Manly Sea Eagles and the Geelong cats could land you a nice long weekend bonanza.

The Tip

This week's multi (boxed):

Manly Sea Eagles to be in front at half time and normal time against the Gold Coast Titans – 1.62 Sportingbet

Geelong to be ahead of Carlton at half time by 1-12 pts and 13-24 points – 6.50 and 5.00 Sportingbet, respectively.

Manly into Geelong 1-12 pts pays a dividend of: 10.53
Manly into Geelong 13- 24 pts pays a dividend of: 8.10

With Roy Hay

Biggest game ever in Australia?

What's the biggest attendance at an Association football match in Australia? I suspect that most people might plump for one of the big World Cup qualifiers at the MCG or the send-off match for Australia in 2006 when the Socceroos played Greece before leaving for Germany.

However the two games which vie for the title of the biggest ever in Australia did not involve the Socceroos at all. There was the Olympic Games final at Stadium Australia in Sydney on 30 September 2000 when it is claimed that 104,098 people watched Cameroon beat Spain five-three on penalties after a two-all draw. There may be some rubber in that crowd figure, like others at the Sydney venue around that time, and I have seen another source that puts the attendance at 98,212.

That was a cracking match between two teams of future stars including Samuel Eto'o, Lauren Etame Mayer, Patrick Mboma and Geremi Nitjap of Cameroon and Carlos Puyol, Albelda, and Xavi of Spain. Xavi scored in 76 seconds and substitute Gabri scored with the last kick of the first half to put Spain two-nil up. Spain also had a penalty saved. But in the second half, Amaya put through his own goal and Eto'o equalized in 58 minutes to end the scoring in normal and extra-time. Spain finished with nine men after Gabri and Jose Mari were sent off. Amaya of Spain missed a vital penalty in the shoot-out and Pierre Wome converted his to give the 'Indomitable Lions' their first gold medals.

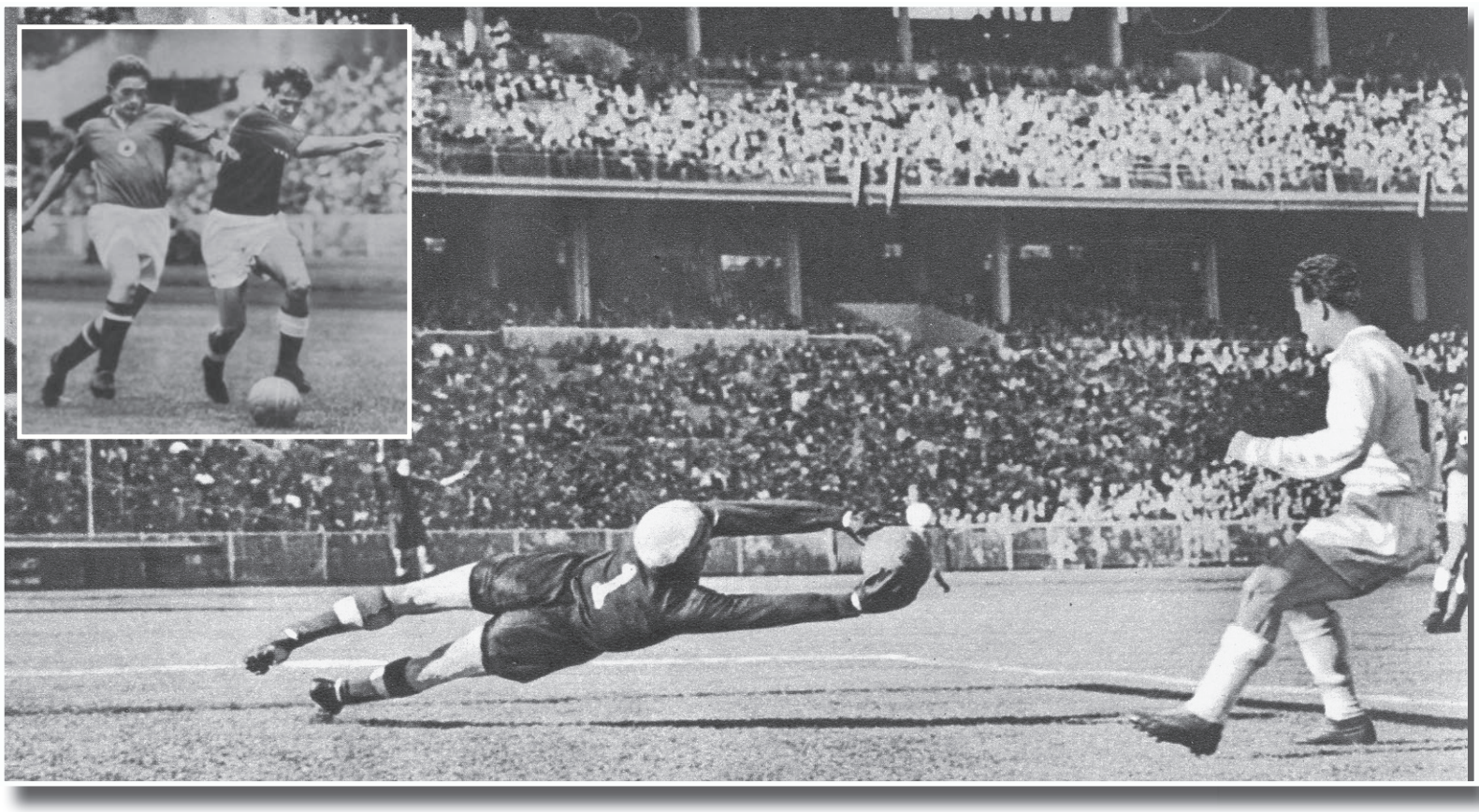
But way back in 1956 it is estimated that 104,700 were at the MCG for the final match of the Melbourne Olympic Games in which the Soviet Union defeated Yugoslavia by a goal to nil. Now it has to be said that this was the day of the closing ceremony and so perhaps not everyone was there for the football. Also the MCG was not the ground manager for that event, and Trevor Ruddell notes that 'the figure is an upper estimate that includes VIPs, officials, guests and athletes as well as ticket sales'. But again I have seen sources claiming a crowd of 120,000 that day.

The Russians were desperate to win that tournament and put out a formidable team with the legendary Lev Yashin in goal, Igor Netto and Boris Kuznetzov. I also suspect that there may have been some nefarious pressure on the Hungarians not to take part, for it was the absence of the football team that resulted in the attention being paid to the water polo where the two nations fought out the notorious 'red water match' in the Olympic pool. In the final, Ilyin scored for the Russians, but Zlatko Papec had the ball in the net for Yugoslavia with ten minutes left for play, only for the Australian linesman and referee to rule it out for offside. When I talked to Papec in 1994, as he accompanied a Hajduk Split youth team to Australia, he still said it was not offside!

The other codes of football all have larger crowds than the round ball game. For example the highest attendance at Australian football was 121,696 at the MCG for the Collingwood versus Carlton Grand Final in 1970. Both rugby league and rugby union's highest attendances were at Stadium Australia. League drew 107,999 to see the Melbourne Storm beat the St George Dragons in the 1999 Grand Final, while union had 109,874 for the All Blacks 39-35 victory over the Wallabies in 2000. Since then the capacity of the stadium at Homebush has been reduced and these numbers are unlikely to be bettered.

Over the years the MCG has consistently attracted the biggest crowds for football including 95,103 for the double header on 25 May 2006. The Matildas played Mexico, followed by the Socceroos against Greece, when Josip Skoko scored the only goal of the game. That remains the highest attendance for an international match involving Australia. The qualifier against Uruguay at Stadium Australia in November 1995 might have run that close, but by then the capacity crowd numbered 82,698.

Melbourne Victory's 55,463 crowd on 18 February 2007 for its grand final victory over Adelaide United at what was then Telstra Dome is certainly an A-League record and probably the biggest attendance at a club match in this country. The Olympic Park record was set in 1966 when 35,856 packed into the ground for the visit of AS Roma, with many more outside, some of whom watched from the top of the velodrome next door. That attendance is double the Olympic Park capacity today.



Lev Yashin at full stretch in the 1956 Olympic Games semi-final against Bulgaria at the MCG. Source: The Olympic Games Melbourne 1956, Herald and Weekly Times, Melbourne, 1956. Inset: Goaslscorer Anatoli Ilyine of the Soviet Union (right) is challenged by Mladen Koskak of Yugoslavia in the Olympic Games final at the MCG in 1956. Source: The Olympic Games Melbourne 1956, Herald and Weekly Times, Melbourne, 1956.

Cameroon players celebrate their victory in the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000. Photo: Allsport.

Mark Bresciano glides past Sotiris Kyrgiakos during the Australia v Greece World Cup send off game at the MCG in May 2006. PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS

Apology

In a recent Blast From The Past on Branko Buljevic we stated that the great Socceroo striker was also known as Branislav. That is incorrect. We apologise for the error and for any offence caused.

KAT'S CORNER

With Peter Katholos

Australian international with 25 caps, Australian Player of the Year, winner of 4 NSL championships, 3 NSL Cups, 557 first grade games, 97 goals from 1976-1996. Played for St George, Sydney Olympic, Apia, Marconi, Melita Eagles and Larissa (Greece). Rated as one of the most technically gifted players ever produced in Australia. Now involved with player development and player management. www.technikfootball.com

South Africa just around the corner

OK, LET'S talk World Cup South Africa 2010 since we are only about 50 days away from the biggest sporting tournament on the planet. Are you listening fans of rugby league, rugby union and AFL?

Yes, that's right. We're talking the real football code; the one that you play with your feet and the one played without using your hands. Now, that is what I call real football. And this particular football code is staging one of the biggest events the world has ever seen when it kicks off on 11 June with the first match between host South Africa and Mexico. I'm already looking forward to that, and I can't wait for the 2022 World Cup in Australia also. Bring it on big time!

So, how do we prepare for such an event and all those sleepless nights? Well, preparation must start from now and slowly preparing your body for the long marathon month. The wife or girlfriend must understand that when this event is on you are out strictly of bounds! It's only a once-every-four-years cycle, so hopefully they'll understand. Unless, they are football fans too, and then of course it's a case of the more the merrier. The schedule must accommodate your sleep, your mood and the general focus that is just football. They also must understand that you will be going out celebrating big time with your mates! As for the neighbours, well they must be prepared for the mega decibel "Yesssss!" during the early hours of the morning and the occasional cursing from time to time.

Also, make sure to check the equipment. Is the TV in perfect working order? Do we need to service it or update it in order to have that perfect picture? Have we installed the latest gadgets to record and slow down to see if it was actually offside, or has the ball crossed the line for a goal? Have we the correct gear to wear, to support our team as we watch so we can look the part? Then, we must study the guide and know the players and all the stars, and all their form so we can have a bet! This will also help us with the expert commentator comments to identify that is being said is actually correct and makes sense!

I'm sure the real football fans will be prepared.

Now, as far as the tournament is concerned, my prediction is that Argentina must be a real good chance to win the cup along with Brazil and Spain. I hope Australia will have a go and reach the quarter finals or, dare to dream, even beyond, but that would be a massive achievement. No doubt, the football will be fast paced and fantastic, with precise passing and spectacular goals enjoyed by massive crowds, and the unity of all nations in peace will be there for all to see. Yes, expect to experience refereeing decisions that are marginal and the debate will again resurface about utilising electronic equipment. Incidentally, I can't believe in this day and age that we don't use high-tech equipment to help with making decisions. Especially goal line decisions and whether it's a goal or not. Absolutely ridiculous! A simple electronic beam can determine that every time. You know, sometimes we must learn to move on with the times.

The Aussie players on the fringe of selection for the World Cup will be biting their nails and hanging on in anticipation of hearing their names in that squad.

It will be interesting to see who will go and who will miss out. I was reading that Brad Holman rates himself a chance to be there, but from the reaction of the general public, mate, and football people I don't fancy his chances.

But then again, Pim Verbeek might have other ideas. Tommy Oar? He's an interesting one as is Joel Griffith. And Melbourne Heart's Simon Colosimo – is he a real chance?

As for Nick Carle that's a difficult one to work out. But why not. By the way, assistant coach Graham Arnold will travel to south London to check him out in person playing for Crystal Palace against West Brom on Tuesday morning. Let's hope Arnie has a change of heart about Nick's abilities.

Another player to consider is Mile Jedinak. He left Australia in January 2008 to seek fame and fortune in Europe, but after failing to hold down a regular spot at Genclerbirligi, he asked for and obtained a loan transfer to Antalyspor. He has been a regular since day one and even scored five goals in what is shaping up as a good season for the club.

I'm sure there are many other fringe players hoping for that call-up and I wish you all well!

It's every football player's dream to play in the World Cup. It must be a very special feeling indeed.

See you all next week!

Nick Carle in action for Crystal Palace. Socceroo assistant coach Graham Arnold will be in London on Tuesday to check out NIck's World Cup claims when his side take on West Bromwich Albion.

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THE KATSA

With George Katsamboukas

J WALKER SCOREBOARD 1-8

Following on from last week's story concerning the abandoned match between South Melbourne and Heidleberg United, the good Legal Folk from the FFV held Court during the week, and they were in fine company with some of the State's finest Legal Eagles representing the individual club's.

Congratulations go out to the so called fans that caused the disruption to the match, and a few of them were rewarded for their efforts with life bans from attending any matches.

And the ones from South Melbourne achieved in a few minutes, what 11 of their players could not in 90, and that is a 3-0 loss for their team.

Moral of the story, if you invade and disrupt, you're a bloody idiot.

Breaking news for the week involved a rival code, Rugby League, where the Melbourne Storm was pinched for salary cap breaches.

They copped the Sad End to end all Sad Ends with removal of premierships, points and a hefty fine.

Seems that one of their Club Powerbrokers chose to have two sets of books and was busted.

Club Powerborkers from our game, please take note, but then again, this type of activity does not occur in Soccer, as everyone goes by the Book when it comes to Pop Star's payments.

Pim Verbeek, will pack his bags after the World Cup Finals, with his next destination being Morocco. It is a move that has surprised many, as he indicated that he wanted to get back into Club Football.

The other surprising thing about this move is that he will not be the Gaffer for the Senior National Team, but he will be taking on a Technical Role for the Youth Team.

Verbeek reckons that the Australian National Coach Gig is one of the toughest in world football, which involve plenty of travel. In fact, he has clocked up over 1 million miles during his stint here.

(1 Million Frequent flyer points, Great Country Australia!)

Another factor was his absence from his family who are based in Holland.

The hunt has now begun from Ben and Co from FFA to find a replacement, stay tuned for further developments.

Until Next Week

This is Katsa, just as you have known him.

And remember, keep your friends close and your Club Powerbrokers closer.

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BOO'S WORLD

With Mark Boric

MORE MONEY FOR FFV COFFERS

CRIME and punishment is one of the most topical issues in Victoria right now. It began last Monday with notorious criminal Carl Williams murdered while serving his punishment in prison. There are some who would say his murder was as fitting a punishment for his crimes as the life sentence in jail issued by the courts. It's all debatable.

On Wednesday, in a far less publicised matter but more relevant to the theme of this publication, the FFV tribunal met to sort out the issue of the abandoned VPL game between South Melbourne and Heidelberg United. Abandoned at 1–1 with no more than a couple of minutes remaining, the tribunal saw fit to award the game 3–0 to Heidelberg, as well as imposing some monetary penalties (ka-ching!) for both parties. Great result for the Bergers, and not a bad one for South Melbourne either and, of course, the FFV (ka-ching! ka-ching!) was the really big winner.

In my opinion, however, it's a poor result for the image of the tribunal, which continues to be hounded by claims of inconsistency. I don't recall St Albans bringing about the abandonment of any games in State League Division One last year though some of their supporters did get up to a bit of mischief. In determining the punishment for their crimes, however, it just so happened that the tribunal meted out a points deduction that saw the club just missing out on getting promoted. I was at one of the Oakleigh v Preston "riots", having a chat with Danny Gnijdic and Robert "Red" Marinkovic as a full can of beer was thrown back into the ground, flying past our heads along with other debris and objects. I counted over a dozen police vehicles parked on the junior pitches of Jack Edwards Reserve in the aftermath. Don't think anyone lost any points though ...

SYDNEY'S SALARY SHENANIGANS

ON Thursday the NRL issued a bombshell, stripping the Melbourne Storm of two Premierships after uncovering serious salary cap breaches over the past five years.

There were fines as well, along with stripping the Storm of all points for this season. The last punishment is as ridiculous as anything the FFV could come up with.

When Sydney FC won the inaugural A-League title they also breached a salary cap. Their punishment was a fine. I thought it would be an interesting exercise to compare how much they exceeded the cap in percentage terms in relation to the Storm's misdemeanours, but I can't work the google on the internet machine as well as journalists giving Chazz Michael Michaels a grilling well enough to find that figure. It seems to have been reported as "undisclosed". That is a lack of transparency which, when you consider a certain wealthy and powerful gentleman's involvement in the FFA and Sydney FC at the time, raises more questions than it answers.

CAP DOESN'T FIT ACL

THE FFA continues to tinker with the A-League salary cap, now allowing for separate Australian and overseas marquee signings.

While the salary cap is probably still necessary to curb any Steve Ross/New York Cosmos-like excesses which brought about the downfall of the NASL, maybe the FFA needs to look at better ways of ensuring the financial survival of clubs.

The salary cap only works to best effect in leagues which are the pinnacle of their sport, like the various major American sports and our own AFL. In competitions which are the only show in town, the cap can financially regulate without affecting the standard of play.

In the NRL it has been regularly breached as clubs test the limits to retain players under competition from the British Super League and rugby union codes which either have a higher cap or no cap at all.

The A-League will continue to find it difficult to improve in standard greatly while the salary cap is in place chiefly because its clubs are vying for players who have the option of hundreds of leagues around the world where wages are unrestricted. Our clubs go from having a level playing field in the A-League to having to go into battle in the Asian Champions League with their hands tied

If Carl was forced to face the FFV Tribunal, we could have stopped all this bloodshed a long time ago...

KRNCEVIC'S CRUNCHLINES

With Eddie Krncevic

Australian soccer legend, Eddie Krncevic represented the Socceroos 35 times and scored 17 goals. He played professionally in Europe for Dimano Zagreb (Croatia), MSV Duisberg (Germany), Mulhouse (France) and Anderlecht, FC Liege, Aalst and Charleroi in Belgium.

STORM BOYS

The Melbourne Storm have dominated the headlines this week and been exposed as rorting the system. Can't help but to think that the punishment does not exactly fit the crime, and once again it will be the players and fans who are the innocent ones that will ultimately be made to cop the brunt of the repercussions.

From a soccer perspective, rugby's misfortune is actually a prime situation to take advantage of. However, it remains to be seen if soccer has the nous and administrative clout to make the most of the situation with effective action. Somehow I doubt it.

Unfortunately, over the last few years the personnel running the soccer show in this country has changed so much that we no longer have people in prime positions that have a genuine interest in the running of affairs of the round ball code. In my opinion, too many people are now involved that have basically come along and joined the bandwagon since the wave of enthusiasm gripped the nation after World Cup qualification to Germany 2006, and are probably more interested in being associated with a 'flavour of the month' type of enterprise than anything else.

No sooner have they joined the ranks then do they leave to pursue ventures anew. One just has to look at the amount of turnover of staff experienced by federations on a national and state level to prove the point.

Why aren't people with a genuine football background consulted and their views considered? It's a crying shame that their expertise is lying dormant and lost, while people who might well have impressive qualifications of sorts in other areas, but lack a basic understanding of the football perspective, are imploding within our game.

There are many Socceroos out there who should be invited to get involved. Alan Davidson, to give you one example, is probably one of our greatest players who actually played as a professional with England's Nottingham Forest under brian Clough during the 80s. Alan may well sit on the A-league match tribunal panel, but of course this is actually of a voluntary nature. Why then is he not, along with so many others, considered worthy to be utilised for his football knowledge and expertise by the powers that be?

In all due respect, I would not be at the least bit surprised if you asked many of today's administrators if they actually know who Alan Davidson is and what he achieved. Can they tell you who Marshall Soper is? Steve Blair? Kimon Taliadoros? I truly doubt it. It's all well and good to have the paperwork behind you, but if you don't really understand your product, then what chance do we have? It's like having waiters in a restaurant who do not know their food or wine.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Interesting decision handed down by the FFV tribunal during the week in regards to the disturbances which occurred at the recent South Melbourne versus Heidelberg United match.

No doubt, the inconsistency of the ruling would have raised quite a few eyebrows in the Victorian football circles. Apart from the fines, I imagine the decision of the amount of points deducted by South Melbourne, would have been met by a touch of disdain down St Albans way.

This has got nothing to do with me having a Croatian background. Far from it. For those of you who need reminding, I am also a former coach of South Melbourne when they were in the NSL and still have many great friends at Bob Jane Stadium.

My gripe has got nothing to do with what colours one is aligned to nor am I trying to justify either incident. Rather, the real issue here is of the lack of consistency with the handing down of the decisions when you compare the two. The South incident happened inside the stadium, with intrusions on the pitch which forced a game to be abandoned. The 1-1 result was handed as a 0-3 to Heidelberg United.

The St Albans incident on the other hand occurred outside the stadium and was essentially an incident involving rival fans. The Saints were deducted 9 points which ultimately cost it the State One championship and promotion to the VPL.

We cannot condone any of the incidents, but I would like to know what differentiates the differences in penalties handed down between one and the other. On the surface of it, it seems that once again there is a lack of balance in the ruling.

SPECIAL, INDEED

Inter Milan manager Jose Mourinho proved once again that he is an astute tactician in the world of football when he orchestrated his troops to a resounding 3-1 victory over Barcelona. The game is far from over, but no doubt Inter appears to have the upper hand in this tantalising tie.

I once heard someone say that when the 19th century Emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte, would appoint a General to spearhead his French Empire, he would often ask if the candidate was "lucky". I think the same applies to football and managers. Some somehow get the rub of the green and some just don't. Mourinho's got it. Guus Hiddink has it. Graham Taylor didn't, if you get my drift.

Taking nothing away from Inter's performance, but isn't it funny how sometimes the factors seem to go all one way?

Barca took to the field a shodow of their normal selves, and even looked tired after having undergone a 14 hour bus trip to get to the San Siro due to flights being grounded because of the Icelandic volcano eruption. There's no disputing that Inter striker Milito had a standout game, but there's no doubt in my mind that his goal that was the icing on the cake on the night was definitely offside. The linesman was out of step with the play and not in line with the last Barca defender.

Furthermore, I felt Barca were also hard done by when not awarded a penalty after Sneijder, who also had a brilliant game, tackled Alves from behind when the Brazilian made his way into the penalty box. If you look at the replays Sneijder never made contact with the ball, even though Alves made a meal of it and also received a yellow card for his troubles when he hit the deck. If those decisions had gone the other way, it could easily have been 2-2. And the away goals would have been a mountain to climb for Inter in the return at Camp Nou.

Anyway, it was a still tremendous game. I suppose it's incidents like these that have us forever enthralled in the discussions that determine the outcomes of football games. Vive la football!

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MACKENZIE AT LARGE

An Occasional Offering from Craig MacKenzie

Three pies and an Apple Danish, ta

SCOTT Webster's matchday diet came back to bite him big-time two Fridays back forcing him to pull out of Oakleigh's home clash with Melbourne Knights.

I am reliably informed by unnamed sources close to the Webster family that Scott's penchant for a Four'N Twenty got the better of him round about lunchtime on the fateful day in question.

Now I myself, being slightly obese, can well understand the ability of the great Aussie pie for satisfying even the most ravenous of gourmands and yes, I vaguely recall a time many, many years ago when I ate a couple of Four'N Twenties in the one day but I cannot for the life of me ever recall eating three at lunchtime. Yet that was the digestive height hit by Scott Webster who then proceeded to gulp down an apple Danish almost as a sweet afterthought.

In the Jack Edwards dressing rooms a few hours later he suddenly took ill. He became ashen faced and started to shake before rushing into a toilet and vomiting. The club doctor was called for and from all reports was gobsmacked at Webster's answer to the obvious question: "What have you had to eat today?"

As yet we have received no further leaked info from Oakleigh so we are unable to verify rumours that the product in question was from the new Four'N Twenty Traveller range but we can verify that Webster wasn't travelling all that well prior to kick-off.

We also can verify that dad Stan and Scott's twin brother Simon share the same wicked sense of humour. They could barely contain their laughter as they related Scott's sorry story.

A contrite Scott Webster assured GW that he has learned his lesson: "I'm sticking to fruit and pasta on gameday from now on."

But Scott won't have his twin brother to help him recover from his eating disorder as Simon Webster has left Oakleigh citing a lack of first team opportunity as a primary reason.

"I told John (Anastasiadis) the other week and he understood. I'm not leaving the club on bad terms it's just that I'm 27 now and I spent seven weeks straight in the under-21s," he said.

The defender/midfielder is likely to join a State Two club and revert to amateur status. Transfer regulations only allow him to switch to another State One club when the next transfer window opens on Monday 7 June whereas a switch to State Two would entail a 30-day enforced lay-off from the date of his last Oakleigh game (in the Under-21s against Hume City).

He's been tapped by Cranbourne, Morwell Pegasus and Southern Stars so far.

Another game, another pre-match routine for Oakleigh Cannons' midfielder Scott Webster. Photo: BILLY BUNTER.

Gold turns to coal

I'M TOLD that Gold Coast United owner and mining magnate Clive Palmer is hopeful that a Chinese coalmining company will become the club's major sponsor.

If so that would ease the slight tug on the billionaire's funds as it's rumoured that $6 million of Palmer's considerable fortune went down the gurgler in United's first A-League foray last season.

Apparently recent rumours that Palmer was in negotiations to sell a 49% holding in his club to Chinese interests were misplaced.

"Clive doesn't go into partnerships easily. Rich people like to do things on their own," said a club insider.

"What he is doing is negotiating a business deal with a Chinese coalmining company and one of the spin-offs from that deal could be that the Chinese company becomes Gold Coast United's major sponsor."

Already the axe is out and the club's budget is the target. Some jobs that were full-time have become part-time and we've been told that some positions currently vacant – assistant coach and goalkeeping coach among them – won't be filled until the Chinese sponsorship money comes through.

Head coach Miron Bleiberg doesn't have to worry about player turnover though as 22 of last year's list remain contracted.

If Bleiberg remains at the helm his headache emerges at the end of the 2010–11 season when many of those contracts are up.

No doubt he's hoping that the club's revenue base is much more expansive by then. Or that some of Palmer's extensive business contacts have jumped on the sponsorship wagon.

Has peace broken out?

I SPENT most of Friday waiting next to the phone for the anticipated call from one of the FFV rebel stakeholders but it never materialised.

Let me state unequivocally that we have not actively pursued the lead stories we've run for the past fortnight over disharmony within the FFV board and among other stakeholders. Or the referees for that matter.

We haven't needed to. Our phone lines and email have run hot on these issues which prompted an investigation and the need to pose some difficult questions to old friends.

But judging by the runaround I received on Friday on another matter it may well be the case that the cone of silence has descended.

I phoned FFV to gain an insight into transfer rules and specifically how they pertain right now to any player wishing to move from a Premier League club to a State One or State Two outfit.

Anna Ruffolo, as welcoming and professional as ever, greeted my phone query. I outlined the issue and she transferred me to Natalie Dimovski, FFV's registrations coordinator.

The line was engaged so I was put on hold. Anna broke in shortly after to say that Natalie was busy but that she would answer my call if I didn't mind waiting.

I didn't mind at all knowing how busy these lines can be especially on Fridays. A couple of minutes went by then Anna cut in again to tell me that Natalie said that I had to contact media and communications coordinator Mia Hayes but unfortunately Mia wasn't in the office.

No problem I said. I'll phone Mia on her mobile. I did and after outlining my query the ever helpful Mia told me that she had to phone Natalie to get an answer.

Some time later Mia got back to me with the information I sought and I thanked her for her assistance.

I couldn't help but thinking that this was a convoluted and entirely inefficient way of doing business but then my journalistic paranoia set in and I started wondering if I was deliberately being denied contact with FFV staff other than Mia.

I hope not. Because if that is the case then it sets off an alarm bell in my head which makes me want to know why anyone serving the football public would shun an accredited media representative. Especially given that my query seemed entirely innocuous.

It's not like I was asking if three members of the audit committee had been sacked some time ago or whether FFV CEO Mark Rendell's contract was up for renewal.

Courage under fire

SNIPER'S Den paintball complex in Melbourne has had recent success dealing with footy clubs and wants to involve soccer clubs in what it sees as a great cross-training, team building activity and an enjoyable club fundraiser.

Based at 455 Centre Dandenong Road, Moorabbin, the company's four massive fields are located close to Boundary Road near Capital Golf Club (a few hundred metres east of Bentleigh Greens' Kingston Heath complex).

Go to www.wearepaintball.com.au for more information. You can phone 9568 3969 or fax 9568 3906 for bookings.

Sally gets her mojo back

By Con Stamocostas

Sally Jean Shipard was born October 20, 1987 in Tumut, New South Wales. She is an Australian international midfielder who became the youngest footballer, male or female, to represent at the Olympic Games (Athens 2004).
Shipard is currently playing for the ACT Australian Institute of Sport and captains the Young Matildas.
A midfielder with great endurance, Shipard acknowledges that her weakness is 'heading, never been a fan'.
Shipard grew up in Wagga Wagga and played her junior football with Wagga PCYC.
Sally chose to take a break from football, rather than joining up to play in the Australian W-League.
Half Time Heroes' Con Stamocostas caught up with Sally recently and posed a few questions.

So Sally, you left the Matilda's at the age 20-21 to do what a lot of young Australia's do and that is go and spend time travelling overseas. That was almost straight after the amazing World Cup experience where the Matildas made history by making the next round and were then narrowly defeated by Brazil in an amazing game. The whole country was behind you at the time, a documentary was made. It seemed that everything was going to plan. Why the decision to take a break?
All that aside I needed my break. I had always said to myself if I wasn't enjoying football and life with football then I would step away. I was happy with the team's progress and obviously thrilled with the World Cup efforts and direction women's football was taking. But it wasn't enough to keep me here training once, if not twice a day...I lost the passion for it I suppose...I was no longer that little girl who I remember so fondly 'falling in love with the game'... I was unhappy and unhealthy.

I read that during your travels you spent time in Spain and you were contracted to a Futsal team in Barcelona and like a lot of young Aussie footballers you had some dramas. Care to elaborate on your experience over there?
Spain was incredible and yes, I had some trouble with the club 'releasing' me upon my return. I had intentions to play over there...I could feel the passion building again...who wouldn't be influenced by the football culture in Barcelona of all places... in turn I didn't want to be away from Australia for another 8 months... having already back-packed for 8 months...there were 'verbal' agreements for the contract made, however no contract was signed. They took the case to one of the head judges at FIFA, and his ruling was that there was no contract. Too late though as I'd already missed out on playing with Canberra United...trained with them week in week out anticipating I'd be cleared. But never was. That was certainly a testing few months. Certainly stronger for it...the body had a good few months to train so looking back as frustrating as it was, it was good in relation to my body, considering I hadn't kicked a ball for so long.

How does it feel to be back training/playing with the Matildas again? Like a family reunion of sorts?
It feels unusual...I know I have experienced it all before...but for some reason this time if feels much more raw...I'm much healthier, older and have acquired a greater balance with my life...I love being back in the environment of the national team... and it is a very exciting time for football in Australia. Only in sport have I ever felt such a natural high after a big win or a hard session. Nothing beats it.

Tell us your thoughts on the W-League and what do you think of the quality?
Having been a spectator the previous 2 years of the W-League...apart from my levels of frustration last year, I have enjoyed myself immensely. Obviously with the league being so fresh, the first couple of years will provide a foundation for us all to build on. Our girls who play overseas have managed to convince several internationals strengthening the league. The younger girls coming through the ranks are fast, skillful and good to watch. Small steps, but I can see it being most successful. We must be successful at the international level for it to continue to blossom. And for that to happen we need a strong competitive league... so it all goes hand in hand really.

Finally, looking forward with the Matildas you have some crucial qualifying games coming up in Asia. The Matildas' recent two game series where you drew one game and won the other against North Korea must give the team confidence for the upcoming matches?
We have a tough group this May in China. It sounds quite silly but in a week and a half our fate for the World Cup next year will be decided. We have qualified before, so for us older players we know the feeling...we are training well at the moment and obviously our strong performances over the past couple of months have boosted our confidence. There's a lot of hard work to do in the meantime but I can't see why we won't be playing in Germany next year at the 2011 FIFA women's World Cup.

Major Honours Achieved

2004 FIFA U19 Women's World Championship (Thailand)
2004 Olympic Games (Athens)
2006 AFC Asian Women's Cup
2006 FIFA U20 Women's World Championship (Russia - captain)
2007 FIFA Women's World Cup (China)

Matilda star Sally Shipard has rediscovered her zest for the game and will be travelling to Chengdu, China for the Women's Asian Cup next month.. PHOTO COURTESY FFA/GettyImages

www.halftimeheroes.com.au
Anything can happen at halftime.....

The Curious Case of Joe Cole

By Leroy Robinson

Available after July 1st: One England international. Only two previous owners. Has more than 10 years on the clock but still a good runner. May, fingers crosses, have another 4 -5 years remaining before bodywork gives out. On average has featured in over 26 premier league games per season over the last 9 years and has scored 10 goals in 53 England games.

Joe Cole's contract is up this summer and you'd think with a CV like that they'd be rumour after rumour regarding his future. In fact there's been very little mention (other than the obligatory interest from cash-rich Man City) of his future in the newspapers. Much of it is because of Cole refusing to talk about it in the media, the other is due to the delicate stage of the season - he doesn't want to be a distraction. Of course, none of it would have been a distraction had Chelsea sorted this out last year. Then again maybe they did and I am doing them a disservice.

Yet, as the season, and Cole's contract, draw to a close there's been no indication (other than Ancelotti saying he is confident Cole will sign a new deal) or encouragement that the sides are close to an agreement. The two sides could be hard at work thrashing out a deal and therefore too busy to speak to the press or they could be waiting until the end of the season so Cole and Chelsea can concentrate on winning the league. Whatever the reasons spare a thought for the fans. From what I've read on forums most want Joe Cole to stay and are frustrated by the lack of news coming from the discussions one way or the other.

Considering Cole can leave on a free transfer this summer, the Chelsea hierarchy are playing a dangerous game. One could read this as confidence on Chelsea's part that Cole, who has stated he wants to stay and "loves the fans", will remain at Stamford Bridge. In their favour may be that he has lived in the London area all his life and has been at Chelsea for 7 years.

So what are the sticking points? Without being privy to the talks I can only speculate that like most contract negotiations this one is about money and length of contract. The newspapers have speculated that Cole wants parity with top earners Frank Lampard and John Terry. I can understand his view. It's his last major contract and will take him up to age 33. Cole is a skill player, a mazy dribbler- I call him England's Ronaldihno – and as such is an endangered species and wants the money he feels his talent and loyalty deserves.

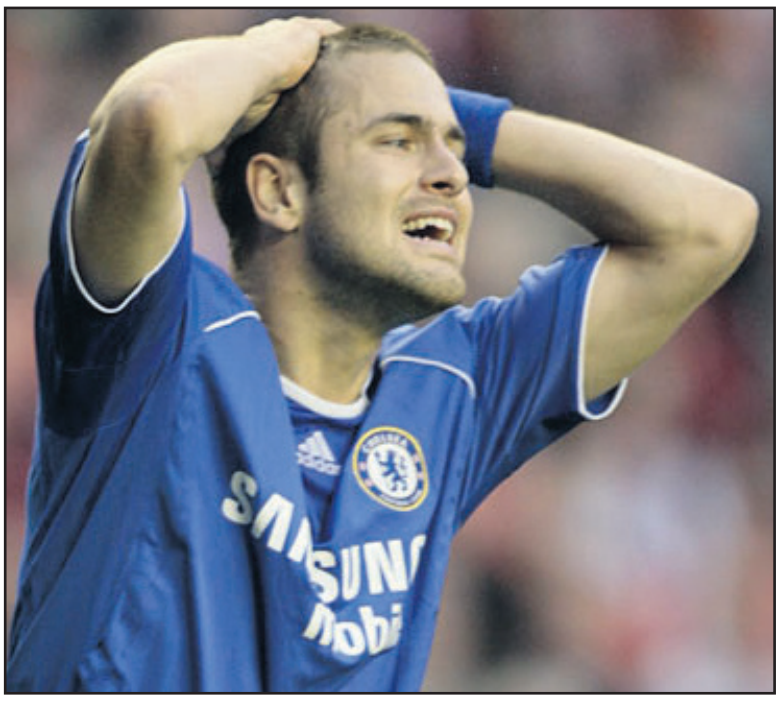
Yet from Chelsea's viewpoint here is a player who hasn't been the same since a cruciate ligament injury sidelined him for the best part of 2009. Prior to this season Cole averaged 20 appearances (starts and sub appearances) in the last 3 EPL seasons whereas before that he averaged 32 a season, a huge drop-off. Now some of this was down to being injured but therein is my point; how can they give such a player a 4 or 5 year deal, given: 1 – his injury problems and 2 – his career production over the last 6 years (28 goals and 19 assists in 157 appearances). Stats are of course an inexact science and don't take into account the actual time on the pitch but bear in mind this guy allegedly wants pay parity with two stalwarts of the team, stalwarts who are rarely injured. He isn't as important a player and his performances this season and over the last few years haven't been of a player fishing for a new contract.

Why is that? Cole, like his Brazilian counterpart Ronaldihno, is a confidence player. Most times dribblers lose the ball, so it takes a tremendous amount of confidence to do something different and risk not only giving away possession but incurring the wrath of the crowd. Under Jose Mourinho Cole struggled at first but once the Portuguese tactician displayed confidence in him Cole thrived. It may not be a coincidence that when Chelsea changed coaches after Mourinho Cole's numbers dropped off.

He may be 28 but he needs coaches to be confident in him or he loses faith in himself. Carlo Ancelotti and Fabio Capello aren't sold on him and it shows. He dribbles less and takes the easy option of laying the ball off instead of having a go at his full-back. It hasn't helped that this season he's been injured and has come back into the side sporadically. The bottom line is Chelsea have a decision to make.

Is he worth it? Past performance isn't an indicator of future performance but in Cole's case that is all we have to go by. Before I answer if Cole is worth it let me say I'm a huge fan. He's an excellent dribbler and commits defenders, something we don't have enough of in the English game. He works hard for the team, doesn't complain if left out and has in the last few years kept out of the headlines, mainly due to the birth of his child. He can use his left foot and right foot and would definitely be in my England squad for the World Cup if fit.

Yet all that said in my view here is a player too full of his own self worth, or maybe his representatives are the true culprits. Allowing player's contracts to get into their final year without renewal always leaves clubs open to being held to ransom because everything is weighted in the player's favour. The club for their part have to balance the cost of his contract with other factors like the cost of finding a replacement. In my view Cole's best days are behind him and as players get older they get more injury prone, not less, so I have to say if I were Chelsea and he wanted parity with the top earners I would say arrivederci and wish him all the best.



Joe Cole is up for grabs come summer. Will it be a case of a Stamford Bridge too far?

So where are these other suitors? They seem conspicuous by their absence. Mention has been made of Manchester United being interested but I doubt the Mancunians would pay what Cole is rumoured to be asking. It wouldn't surprise me if the Man City rumours were started by his agent to inject some life into the discussions. The talk was of him being offered £180,000 a week but I like to think that City are not going to become the new Chelsea and sign players past their prime who are after a retirement home, but then again they signed Patrick Vieira didn't they?

Wisdom dictates that with no transfer fee Cole could command such wages but where does that leave the better players at City and where does it leave their wage structure – if there is one? Don't underestimate the problems such a signing creates for team harmony as players DO compare wage slips, especially with a year to go until contract renewal time.

Anyway where does Cole fit into their system? Mancini plays 4-5-1 away and not 4-3-3. At home he plays 4-4-2 with Johnson and Bellamy on the wings. With Wright-Phillips in reserve as well as Petrov, would he get many games? And what of Chelsea? If I'm Chelsea I use the Cole situation to subliminally tell players like Ballack and co that if they think Chelsea is the home of football pensioners they need to think again. "We won't be held to ransom", should be the message.

I may be proved wrong, Cole could sign on at Chelsea and have a stormer of a world Cup, but I doubt it because his best moments of late have been few for both club and country. Yes, he scored a beauty against Sweden in Cologne in the 2006 World Cup and an excellent goal against United this term but over the past few years he's either been injured or ineffective. Chelsea may also argue that it isn't what you've done in the past for your club that counts when signing a new contract; it's what they think you can do for them in future. Ironically, that's what Cole is probably asking of Chelsea with his wage demands - and that's why I expect Cole to pack up his impressive CV and on his way.

An Apology of a Defender

An apology to all GW readers. I was wrong about John Terry in an article earlier in the season. I had complete faith that he would up his performance (no pun intended!) and put the whole sex scandal thing behind him. Well, the fans haven't allowed him to and though I don't have a hotline to his thoughts I'd suggest JT has been affected by the animosity of the fans. His "performances", for want of a better word, have been lamentable. He's mistimed tackles, cost his team goals with his mistakes and generally performed like a blind newsreader.

His lack of pace has always been supplemented by great timing but take away the timing and you have a defender who isn't an international standard player and gets shown up by players running at him. It doesn't help that Chelsea's centre back parings have as much pace as an anaesthetised turtle. Terry is a good old fashioned stopper who needs a quicker centre back alongside him to cover for his lack of speed. When Carvahlo was in his prime the partnership was the best in the premier league but since Ricardo's injuries he is now as slow as Alex and that has shown up Terry.

I still think he should have remained England's captain but if he exports his abysmal performances to South Africa, and Rio Ferdinand stays injured, then England have zero chance of winning the World Cup.

Sources: Daily Mail
ESPN Soccer Net

Joe Cole Fact File
Age: 28
Place of birth: Paddington, London, England
Height: 1.76 m (5 ft 9+1/2 in)

Playing position: Attacking Midfielder, Winger/Striker

Current club: Chelsea

Youth career
1994–1998 West Ham United

Senior career
Years Team Apps (Gls)
1998–2003 West Ham United 126 (10)
2003– Chelsea 180 (28)

National team
England U21 2 (0)
2001– England 53 (10)

IN OFF THE POST

Got something to say? Drop us a line and get it off your chest. Best letter wins double movie pass to Palace Cinemas.

mailbag@goalweekly.com

PALACE CINEMAS

Dear GW,
I am a western suburbs resident and am a soccer fan.

I noticed your story and photo coverage on Matthew Theodore over the weekend game against Heidelberg and want to thank you for having positive remarks to say about this hardworking young player.

This boy certainly knows his stuff and I was disappointed to see that when he played for Melbourne Victory the coach did not do the right thing for his future career by not playing this fine skilled soccer player after he recovered from his injury as he rightly deserved. They just kept him on the bench until his contract expired this year!

He is a fine skilled player – give him the media that he deserves! It is guys like you that help support players for their future.
Thank you!

Angela Merlino, Melbourne

Dear GW,
I tend to agree with the letter sent in by MJ from Port Melbourne last week. I too enjoy all the football stuff, but after seing your front pages the last two week's there doesn't seem to be too much love going around Victorian football at present. Therefore, in order to chill everyone out, can you please make the Wag of the Week picture bigger??
Dennis, Hoppers Crossing

goal! Weekly

Get some real balls.
Get some Goal! Weekly
every Monday.

LONDON CALLING

With Adam North

Is the English Premier League's future bright or worryingly bleak?

Without a doubt the top division of English football has grown into being the biggest and most watched league around the globe, but will the next twenty or so years be as good as what we've seen so far?

It has indeed been a great near twenty years of football in England. We have seen Manchester United dominate both league and cup competitions, we've had some Champions League winners and finalists, and we've even seen a team, Arsenal, go through a whole league season without losing a game. There has been controversy, humour, bust-ups and some brilliant football played. The league has also attracted some of the greatest footballers to ever play the beautiful game. Names like Cantona, Henry, Zola and Ronaldo have all graced football grounds around the country with their footballing brilliance. And of course who could ever forget Kevin Keegan's mental explosion aimed towards Sir Alex Ferguson and his United team live on television.

And, at this moment in time, the Premier League is certainly the biggest league in the world. Despite the failure of English teams in the Champions League this season, the league can still point to having at least three of Europe's top teams, and in many people's opinions the football played in this country is the most exciting to watch out of any league in Europe. So surely everything is going swimmingly well in English league football then, right? Well, not so much, as if many stories surrounding several clubs in the league are to be believed, then the Premier League could be looking at going through its toughest period so far.

Before we get to the pessimism, let's mention some of the more promising things occurring in Premier League football right now. In Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal, the league has three top European clubs, and that's not to mention Liverpool who should really be up in that bracket with the current league top three. All four clubs are continually setting themselves up for both present and future success, and all four have the ability to beat any other team in world football.

And not only is their strength at the top of the division, but also in the remaining European places as well. This season has easily produced the most exciting race for Champions League football that the league has ever seen, as Liverpool, Manchester City, Tottenham, Aston Villa and Everton have all had an eye of finishing fourth throughout the season. Perhaps the best thing about these teams is how different their approach to success has been, as some have spent big on well established players, some have put their faith, and a great deal of money, in hard working English talent, and some have relied upon a small nucleus of excellent players to grind themselves towards top honours.

The EPL precedent was set when Jack Walker's millions brought the trophy to Blackburn Rovers in 1995, but for how long will the money bubble continue before it bursts.

Having so many competitive teams can only be a good thing for English league football, as more competition will always make teams and players better, and hopefully this will mean more of Europe's brighter stars see playing for teams like Villa and Spurs as a good alternative to sitting on the bench for teams like Manchester United or Real Madrid. And what's more, I genuinely feel that teams like City and Villa aren't too far away from seriously contending for the title in the Premier League, which of course would be terrific for English football.

Further down the league table are teams like Birmingham, Sunderland and Stoke, who have all impressed at times during the season, and who are all able to provide an upset or two against the Premier League big boys. And let's not forget one of the best stories of this season, Fulham, who are on the brink of a Europa League final, as well as already holding victories over United and Liverpool, whilst working with a tight financial structure and small football squad.

Of course the rest of English league football has also benefited from a strong top division, as the Championship is now both hyper competitive and also fairly exciting and attractive to watch. Some big names in English football, the most obvious being Leeds United, ply their trade out of the top division, which shows the depth of club football in the country.

And yet, with all that good being said, these are worrying times for the Premier League, and in the most part, like pretty much everything in the world, it all comes down to money. This season the English Premier League has seen its first member fall into administration. And the true extent of Portsmouth's debt is extremely worrying as they owe over £120 million pounds to various sources.

It's not only Pompey that are in trouble, as Hull have just suggested that they are on the brink of being in some serious financial difficulties. According to the now Hull Chairman Adam Pearson, his predecessor's business decisions were ludicrous, as he had a wage bill of £40 million whilst having a turnover of just £50 million, whist he also spent over £6 million in agents' fees over a two year period.

Perhaps most worrying is that it's not just the smaller, less successful teams that are landing themselves in major debt. Both Liverpool and Manchester United, certainly the two biggest clubs in English football, have serious debts that if they were called in could cause problems for the giant clubs.

In a sense, the Premier League has been a victim of its own success. It is constantly having more television money being pumped into it, and the ideal of being, and staying, in the league is so tempted for clubs and their chairmen that they are risking their whole existence to simply play football and turn a profit in the biggest league in the world.

Football is now bigger than ever, and the money involved in the game certainly shows this. Transfers are being conducted for £30 million and upwards with growing regularity, and some players are being paid over one hundred thousand pounds a week. And at this moment in time there seems no halting the ever increasing amount players are being paid, or the money that clubs pay other clubs for their services.

For me, the Premier League is like an ever inflating balloon, getting bigger and bigger every year. My worry is that at some point the balloon will burst, and some teams may fall not only into lower-leagues, as Leeds did, but into non-existence. The FA, a body who's true power often seems laughable when compared with how television companies seem to dictate their wishes upon the league, seriously need to halt the ever rising finances, and the ever increasing debts that most clubs are operating with.

For a start, the Premier League needs to introduce a salary cap, something which is a success in American sports. There is simply no need for players to be paid so much, and clubs that have no internal salary caps are placing themselves in serious trouble. Of course, a salary cap may mean that some of Europe's brightest stars no longer want to play in England, but that for me is nothing in comparison with having a club gamble with their entire future.

Something else the FA need to implement is a much better 'fit and proper persons test' concerning prospective owners of clubs, as the league is now littered with clubs whose foreign owners, who in no way am I blaming just because they're not English, have just taken the clubs for whatever they can and then left without so much as a leaving party. It should be the FA's job to make sure that those taking over clubs are actually looking to do more than just turn a profit for themselves.

Of course, these changes would only be the start of a full shake-up of Premier League football. The FA, or even FIFA, need to be more involved in the control of the top English division, because if they don't there will be more clubs just like Portsmouth who put their whole existence on the line just to play in the Premier League. And if they don't, I seriously worry for not only the future of some Premier League teams, but also for the future of the Premier League as a whole.

Fans bullish about the Socceroos in South Africa

With just 48 days until the FIFA World Cup in South Africa, Australian fans are putting themselves through their final paces for the journey across the Indian Ocean.

The Green and Gold Army (GGArmy), Australia's national football supporters network, will be taking a party of 400-plus to the tournament on its official 'football safari', with many more making the trip independently.

Despite constant reports of the challenges of South Africa and the country's readiness to host the event, fans have voted with their feet and booked their passage to the Cup.

"We've been buoyed by the response of our members for our 15 & 19-day World Cup tour programs," says GGArmy founder John McGauran.

"There are some remaining spaces and we've now broken parts of the tour down into shorter-run modules to help out Australian fans who for various reasons can only make a short trip to the World Cup." With Australian fans snapping up tickets on par with more populous and established football nations, there's no doubt the South African event will have a significant Australian presence.

"I don't know why Australia has been so prominent in relation to ticketing demand for the World Cup," says McGauran, a man who has traveled to Uzbekistan, China and Japan during the Socceroos qualification, but he has some theories.

"It could be the Australian economy outstripping the world, the fact that, given our geography, long haul globe trotting is in our nature, the strong Aussie dollar or it could just be that Australians really understand what a truly fun and spectacular event the World Cup is."

"Without wishing the first three games away, and ignoring the fairly important point that we need to qualify first, a second-round elimination match with England is all too possible and that would be the most amazing sporting experience to see live."

Hence, given the GGArmy's move to 'bite-size' packages for the remaining places on the Johannesburg-based tour, of particular interest to fans is likely to be the seven (7) night option which not only comes with tickets and transfers to Australia's potentially cut-throat playoff with Serbia, but also a Round of 16 game that's guaranteed to be the Socceroos match should they advance.

With England tipped to top their group, that would equate to a winner takes all clash between the Green and Gold and the Three Lions.

For further information visit www.ggarmyontour.com

The Green and Gold Army will be out in force once again, this time in South Africa.

WAG OF THE WEEK

Alena Seredova Age: 30
Significant Other: Juventus' goalkeeper, Gianluigi Buffon.

COUCH POTATO DEPT.

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT

goalweekly.com

SETANTA SPORTS

Monday 26th April
1:30am Bundesliga Freiburg vs Wolfsburg LIVE
5am Ligue 1 Marseille vs St Etienne LIVE
9:15am Bundesliga Hoffenheim vs Hamburg
11am Serie A Napoli vs Cagliari
4pm Ligue 1 Tolouse vs Auxerre

Wednesday 28th April
3am Ligue 1 Grenoble vs PSG LIVE
8:45am Copa Libertadores teams TBC LIVE

Thursday 29th April
3am TBC LIVE
8:45am Copa Libertadores Teams TBC LIVE

Saturday 1st May
7:15am Ligue 1 Auxerre vs Marseille
4pm J-League Vegalta Sendai vs Cerezo Osaka LIVE
9:30pm SPL Hibernian vs Hearts LIVE
11:30pm TBC LIVE

Sunday 2nd May
2am Serie A Parma vs Roma LIVE
7am SPL Celtic vs Motherwell
8:45am Bundesliga Teams TBC
10:30pm Eredivisie NAC Breda vs FC Twente LIVE

Monday 3rd May
1am Ligue 1 Bordeaux vs Tolouse LIVE
5am Ligue 1 Montpellier vs Lyon LIVE
7am Euro League Teams TBC

Wednesday 5th May
4:40am SPL Celtic vs Rangers LIVE
8:45am Copa Libertadores Teams TBC
3pm J-League Urawa Reds vs Nagoya Grampus LIVE

Thursday 6th May
2:30am TBC LIVE
5am Coppa Italia FINAL Internazionale Milano vs Roma LIVE
8:45am Copa Libertadores Teams TBC LIVE

31 tv now!

The Futbol Town Show
Every Monday 7pm

Extra Time Magazine Show
Every Wednesday 8pm

The Green Gully Football Show
Every Saturday 10.30am

SBS

SBS One
Monday April 26th
5:30 pm Futbol Mundial

Wednesday April 28th
4:30 am UEFA Champions League: Semi Final 2nd Leg. Barcelona v Inter Milan Live to all centres

Thursday April 29th
4:30 am UEFA Champions League: Semi Final 2nd Leg. Lyon v Bayern Munich Live to all centres
10:00 pm UEFA Champions League Hour

Friday 30 April
4.45am - LIVE semi final 2nd leg Liverpool v Atletico Madrid
7.00am - Delayed semi final 2nd leg Fulham v Hamburg

Sunday 2 May
3:00 pm UEFA Europa League Highlights
3:30 pm UEFA Champions League Magazine Program
4.00pm Les Murray's Football Feature: UEFA Champions League Semi Finals 2nd leg Lyon v Bayern Munich & Barcelona v Inter Milan
5:00 pm The World Game
6:00 pm Road to the 2010 FIFA World Cup - This episode looks at the chances of The Netherlands and Argentina at the 2010 FIFA World Cup Final

SBS Two
Wednesday April 28th
8:35 pm UEFA Champions League: Semi Final 2nd Leg

Thursday April 29th
8:30 pm UEFA Champions League - Semi Final 2nd Leg.

Friday April 30th
7:30 pm UEFA Champions League Hour
8:30 pm UEFA Europa League - Semi Final 2nd Leg.

FOX SPORTS

WEEK 38
Sat May 1 Birmingham v Burnley 9.40 pm (Fox 3)
Sat May 1 Manchester City v Aston Villa 11.55 pm (Fox 3)
Sat May 1 Portsmouth v Wolves 11.55 pm Viewers Choice
Sat May 1 Stoke v Everton 11.55 pm Viewers Choice
Sat May 1 Tottenham v Bolton 11.55 pm Viewers Choice
Sun May 2 Liverpool v Chelsea 10.25 pm (Fox 2)
Sun May 2 Fulham v West Ham 11.55 pm (Fox 3)
Mon May 3 Sunderland v Manchester United 12.55 am (Fox 2)
Mon May 3 Wigan v Hull 10.25 pm (Fox 3)
Tue May 4 Blackburn v Arsenal 1.55 am (Fox 3)
Thurs May 6 Manchester City v Tottenham 4.55 am (Fox 3)

one HD

Monday 26th April
10:30 pm World Football News
11:30 pm Bundesliga Weekly Highlights
12:30 am The Serie A Highlights Show

Tuesday 27th April
12:30 pm Serie A Matchday 35 - Teams TBA

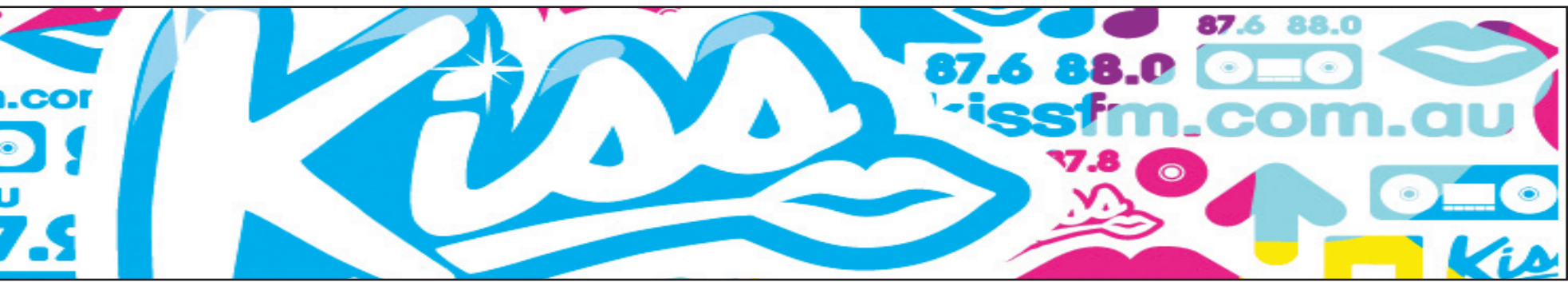
Wednesday 28th April
04:15 am The Serie A Highlights Show (Rpt) Matchday 35
07:30 am Bundesliga (Rpt) Matchday 32 - Borussia Monchengladbach V Bayern Munich

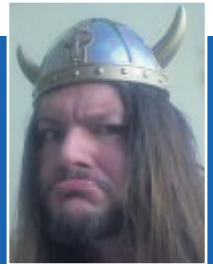
Thursday 29th April
01:15 am Serie A (Rpt) Matchday 35 - Teams TBA
03:15 am The Serie A Highlights Show (Rpt) Matchday 35

Friday 30th April
03:30 pm Bundesliga Weekly Highlights (Rpt) Matchday 32

Saturday 01st May
07:15 am The Serie A Highlights Show (Rpt)Matchday 35

Sunday 2nd May
12:15 am Bundesliga Matchday 33 - Teams TBA





TSIGAN'S TSIGAR

With Mike Lilikakis

Tsigan Rolls One Up from the South Coast!

SPQR

Anzac Day is upon us, and it's the 2nd big day on the calendar out of 3 to spend in reflection. It has always made me wonder why pacifists don't make more of a grumble about a National Holiday being wrought out of bloodshed, as pagans do about Easter or Christmas. Sure, people can romantisize war on occasion for all the right reasons or political purposes, and there's not way that anyone can justify killing in the name of a rage against the machine. However, amidst the cacophonic shredding of heavy guitar riffs, thumping bass, and scattermongering drums, there is always a moment of silent lucidity which transcends the morning mist. I wonder how many dudes are serious about watching their 10 favorite war films over the break?

At the risk of sounding like Margaret Pomerancz bonking David Letterman, here goes my top ten war films... WOOOOOOOOOT!

1) GALLIPOLI. Yeah, I'm a fan of everything about this chick flick. Blood, sweat, tears, footy in front of the pyramids, trenches, killer soundtrack and for goodness sake, the best lines in a movie. What are YOUR legs? SPRINGS... STEEL SPRINGS!

2) DOWNFALL. The last few days of Adolf Hitler, trapped in his bunker in Berlin...waiting for the imminent, yet still delusional. Just like a coach who's team is being pumped 6-0 with 5 minutes to go, and says, "heads up boys, we're still in this!"

3) THE DEER HUNTER. A war veteran could watch this tale every day for therapy, and recover admirably after 30 years, providing a game of Russian Roulette was provided with a pizza after the last guitar chord has been plucked. De Niro and Walken rock the Saigon Kazbar in this extraordinary culture clash.

4) BREAKER MORANT. Edward Woodward would chop wood if only he would craft something out of the wood wood. Not so much a buddy buddy flick, as a tirade against the madness of colonial ties to the motherland. Viva le Republic!

5) PLATOON. The cast is enough to warrant arrest. Charlie Sheen in his wonder years along with Forest Whittaker, Tom Berenger, Willem Dafoe and Oliver Stone. If it wasn't for the depressing nature of Albinoni's Adagio, it would go straight to number one.

6) FULL METAL JACKET. "Well is this a dagger I see here before me?" There more one hit wonders in this flick than Eddie Murphy's Delirious...and also with the same language shed in Technicolour. What could be more impressive than seeing a Drill Sargeant getting have his way with a group of try hards?

7) THE LAST SAMURAI. One could only wish they were Japanese after seeing this tale of traditional heroism in defiance of industrial progress. Sure, Tom Cruise is in it, but the grouse thing is is that there's no elements of Ron L. Hubbard's freakshow within.

8) MASTER AND COMMANDER/ GLADIATOR. Well, the former is a war flick albeit one based on cat and mouse stealth, and the latter has a great intro to the wonders of the Roman Military juggernaut. The opening sequences in these movies warrants exposure in my top 10. So up yours, or in yours, depending on your vegan mood.

9) LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA?FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS. There's something about watching films in another language which sends me straight to SBS heaven.

10) SAVING PRIVATE RYAN. Can't help but get nauseous watching the first 15 minutes of machine gun fire and limbs being blown everywhere. As far as realism goes, this movie makes you go off BBQ meat lovers in a jiffy for life.

I would've stuck 300 in there, but there's too much BS about 44 pack abs, immortal monsters, and an 8 foot tall bisexual Persian king who sings bass....sigh.

WOMPING

Success is truly measured by how many hits we can take, and by moving from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm. Indeed, the bottle of cheap wine and a three day growth is only in relation to the ability of getting up out of the gutter without needing to take a shower, and cracking more skulls. Ask any good Viking. The only true wisdom is in knowing that you know nothing and to appreciate that even a wise man knows that he needs advice whilst a fool won't have a bar of it. Don't wait to be told, you need Palmolive Gold.

SUCH and SUCH

If you can't stay calm during chaos, its only because you haven't understood the situation properly. Order a double beef, double cheese, triple anchovy vegetarian pizza with sundried tomato and quadruple olives, and by the time the pizza cometh, thy ways shalt be in great stead. If not, the very least shalt be a tittilating dance on thy palate. Yea verily.

Be of use, but don't get used. It is much better to be silent and be thought a fool, than to open your mouth and remove all doubt. Speak quietly And seriously, why is ABBREVIATION such a big word.

By eucalyptus gum, as far as pride goes I take the cake, nyum nyum.

I'm so clever, I don't even understand a word I'm saying.

Speak quietly and carry a gun, you'll go far. And what's with sports these days, anyway?

Sport doesn't produce character, it reveals it. Unless of course, you like taking bribes, and who needs character when someone offers you 10k to throw a game anyway? Yeehar.

Go on, take the money and run rabbit, run.

Well, its short and sweet this week my friends.

Next week, once the fit has been wiped off the shan I will endeavour to get the latest on the carp which is celery cap. Go you Stormers.....puahahahahahaha, suffer in your jocks.

XP
XBOX
XXX
Xcuse me
Tsigan FC Forever

Doh! It's the TV deal, Stupid!

Don't you like it when pretentious writers use some obscure foreign reference to start a "This is what I think about stuff" story that then doesn't really make sense to the point and theme of the story?

I don't like it I love it! So without any more waffling I present 'esprit d'escalier,' which translates to the wit of the staircase', and usually refers to the perfect witty response you think up after the conversation or argument is ended. It's the answer you cannot make, the pattern you cannot complete till afterwards it suddenly comes to you when it is too late."

So there you go you can impress your hipster friends with some French speak, while you eat that slow cooked meal at the trendy Lesbian cafe which you arrived with on your single speed bicycle.

What has suddenly come to late is that after five years football is not earning nowhere near enough what it is spending.

What must have been Frank Lowy, John O'Neil and Matt Carool been thinking when they first negotiated the TV deal five years ago. Especially when the deal was negotiated before the Socceroos scored their first ever World Cup goal, before they won their first ever World Cup game game and before they qualified for their first ever World Cup Round of 16 match.

Frank Lowy is Australia's richest man and you don't get that rich without being able to negotiate. However the truth regarding football's TV deal is that it pulled its pants down to early and left them down for too long.

When Harry Kewell scored that goal against Croatia to take the Socceroos into knockout stages of the World Cup Foxtel must have looked at the TV deal with big smiles on their dials while the FFA suits must have been looking down at their ankles feeling the breeze.

I have said this before and I'll say it again that John O'Neill's best work for Rugby came while he was working for the Football Federation of Australia, having negotiated a deal that took the FFA's biggest asset away from Free to Air and onto Pay TV, which has only a 25% take up of the Australian population.

Let's look at the TV revenue numbers:

*** AFL $780m for 5 years, or $156m per year**
*** Rugby League $500m for 6 years, or $85m per year**
*** Football $120m for 7 years, or just over $17m per year**

Football can only spread $17m to its now 11 clubs; dusting off the calculator that work s out to $1.5 million a club. Some reports have come out recently that it costs $8m a year to run an A League club. Did anyone look at the expenses and revenues columns and see a big red number at the bottom of the page?

Some pundits have said that football needs to get a stronger foothold in the mainstream media. Don't hold your breath. The mainstream media will not give any favours to football. They have other sports they need to peddle. A recent Tim Cahill documentary features Timmy on the way to a Socceroos World Cup qualifier against Uzbekistan last April. He is flicking through the sport section of the Sydney paper the Daily Terror and laments the lack of coverage of football. After flicking through pages of Rugby League, Netball and Sailing he finally

finds a Socceroos article, Tim hold's up his hand in defeat and says: "what do we have to do?

So the mainstream media doesn't care, crowds are dropping off and the clubs are losing money; what can football do to save itself and shut up the prophets of doom?

All we can do is hope and wait. First we hope that the Socceroos do well at the World Cup beginning in June and that reminds the Australian sporting public of the chaos, beauty and awesomeness that is football and this emotion and goodwill then flows through to the A League.

We hope that Australia wins the bid the bid for the 2018/ 2022 World Cup and wait for the decision by the 24 man FIFA executive in December , then finally we wait until the new TV deal comes up in a couple of years that will hopefully secure the A League's stability.

Otherwise I'll be looking for the French phrase that translates to "we are fucked" (nous sommes baisés)

STATE NORTH WEST 2

Seniors

Whittlesea Ranges 1 Moreland City 3, Altona City 0 Altona East Phoenix 3 (S Kul P Meletis B Lojanica), Ballarat Red Devils 1 Port Melbourne 2 (T Paton), Brunswick City 1 (B Gorcevski) Sydenham Park 0, Werribee City 0 Geelong Rangers 1, Williamstown 0 Banyule City 0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Port Melbourne	3	3	0	0	8	2	9
Brunswick City	3	3	0	0	6	2	9
Moreland City	3	2	0	1	7	4	6
Whittlesea Ranges	3	2	0	1	7	6	6
Williamstown	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
Werribee City	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Altona East Phoenix	3	1	0	2	4	4	3
Geelong Rangers	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
Altona City	3	0	2	1	2	5	2
Ballarat Red Devils	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
Banyule City	3	0	1	2	2	6	1
Sydenham Park	3	0	1	2	2	7	1

Reserves

Whittlesea Ranges 4 Moreland City 2, Altona City 2 Altona East Phoenix 0, Ballarat Red Devils 2 Port Melbourne 1, Brunswick City 3 Sydenham Park 0, Werribee City 6 Geelong Rangers 1, Williamstown 1 Banyule City 0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Whittlesea Ranges	3	3	0	0	9	2	9
Altona City	3	3	0	0	6	1	9
Brunswick City	3	2	1	0	9	3	7
Port Melbourne	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Ballarat Red Devils	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
Williamstown	3	1	1	1	2	3	4
Werribee City	3	1	0	2	7	6	3
Altona East Phoenix	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Moreland City	3	1	0	2	6	10	3
Banyule City	3	0	1	2	1	3	1
Geelong Rangers	3	0	1	2	2	11	1
Sydenham Park	3	0	0	3	3	10	0

STATE SOUTH EAST 2

Seniors

Frankston Pines 2 (E Southerington J Bowen) Diamond Valley Utd 3 (M Ladnjak V Muratbegovic AJ Hammer), Eastern Lions 0 Southern Stars 2 (B Sakaci AF Mulcahy), Dandenong City 2 (R Muriqi S Andrijasevic) Morwell Pegasus 0, Heatherton Utd 0 Berwick City 0, Knox City 2 (A Edgar P Ajao) Doncaster Rovers 1 (AS Cooper), Southern Suburbs 3 (N Rossios S Patsias K Olabuntu) Casey Comets 3 (N Henry 3)

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Southern Stars	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Morwell Pegasus	3	2	0	1	8	6	6
Diamond Valley Utd	3	2	0	1	9	9	6
Dandenong City	3	1	2	0	6	4	5
Casey Comets	3	1	2	0	6	4	5
Knox City	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Heatherton Utd	3	0	3	0	3	3	3
Doncaster Rovers	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Berwick City	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Southern Suburbs	2	0	1	1	4	6	1
Frankston Pines	3	0	1	2	2	4	1
Eastern Lions	3	0	1	2	4	8	1

Reserves

Frankston Pines 1 Diamond Valley Utd 5, Eastern Lions 4 Southern Stars 2, Dandenong City 4 Morwell Pegasus 3, Heatherton Utd 0 Berwick City 1, Knox City 2 Doncaster Rovers 0, Southern Suburbs 1 Casey Comets 1

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Diamond Valley Utd	3	3	0	0	13	3	9
Berwick City	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Eastern Lions	3	2	0	1	9	7	6
Knox City	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Heatherton Utd	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Dandenong City	3	2	0	1	7	7	6
Casey Comets	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Southern Stars	3	1	0	2	6	7	3
Frankston Pines	3	1	0	2	6	8	3
Southern Suburbs	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Morwell Pegasus	3	0	0	3	6	12	0
Doncaster Rovers	3	0	0	3	2	9	0

STATE NORTH WEST 3

Seniors

Geelong 3 (T Hardy 2 M Nikolovski) Sunbury Utd 0, Keilor Park 1 (M Xerri) Essendon Utd 0, La Trobe University 1 (D Mitric) Lalor 1 (D Christou), Maribyrnong Greens 0 Hume Utd 1 (E Ahmetovic), Melbourne University 2 (A Griffith I Lehtonen) Westgate 3, Yarraville Glory 1 Cairnlea 0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Geelong	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Yarraville Glory	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Hume Utd	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Keilor Park	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
La Trobe University	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
Westgate	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
Sunbury Utd	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Melbourne University	3	1	0	2	6	4	3
Lalor	3	0	3	0	5	5	3
Essendon Utd	3	0	1	2	2	6	1
Cairnlea	3	0	0	3	1	5	0
Maribyrnong Greens	3	0	1	2	0	5	-2

Reserves

Geelong 0 Sunbury Utd 7, Keilor Park 4 (M Mohamed 2 M Sirgiovanni M Mazzarino) Essendon Utd 0, La Trobe University 3 Lalor 3, Maribyrnong Greens 2 Hume Utd 2, Melbourne University 3 Westgate 2, Yarraville Glory 2 Cairnlea 3

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Keilor Park	3	3	0	0	15	5	9
Sunbury Utd	3	3	0	0	12	3	9
La Trobe University	3	1	2	0	10	8	5
Lalor	3	1	2	0	8	6	5
Maribyrnong Greens	3	2	1	0	6	4	4
Cairnlea	3	1	1	1	8	8	4
Melbourne University	3	1	0	2	6	10	3
Essendon Utd	3	0	2	1	3	7	2
Geelong	3	0	2	1	4	11	2
Yarraville Glory	3	0	1	2	5	8	1
Hume Utd	3	0	1	2	10	14	1
Westgate	3	0	0	3	2	5	0

STATE SOUTH EAST 3

Seniors

Croydon City Arrows 1 (DD McCandless) Kingston City 2 (P Sequeira 2), Fitzroy City 3 (N Mitrevski HF Wootton) Peninsula Strikers 1 (T Papadopoulos), Nunawading City FC 0 Waverley Wanderers 2 (C(Bandis D Petta), Mornington 2 (C Leopold AJ Skledar) Noble Park Utd 3 (C Durand D Stojanovic CK Stemn Jnr), Springvale City 3 (H Solomon) Brandon Park 3 (A Varteresian), South Springvale 4 (S Catherine B Karaga L Karanicolas) North Caulfield 0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
South Springvale	3	3	0	0	11	2	9
Waverley Wanderers	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Kingston City	3	2	0	1	6	2	6
Noble Park Utd	3	2	0	1	8	6	6
Fitzroy City	3	2	0	1	6	5	6
Croydon City Arrows	3	1	0	2	6	5	3
Mornington	3	1	0	2	5	6	3
North Caulfield	3	1	0	2	4	8	3
Peninsula Strikers	3	1	0	2	4	8	3
Nunawading City FC	3	1	0	2	1	5	3
Brandon Park	3	0	2	1	5	7	2
Springvale City	3	0	1	2	4	9	1

Reserves

Croydon City Arrows 2 Kingston City 0, Fitzroy City 2 Peninsula Strikers 2, Nunawading City FC 6 Waverley Wanderers 1, Mornington 2 Noble Park Utd 2, Springvale City 3 Brandon Park 1, South Springvale 5 North Caulfield 0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Noble Park Utd	3	2	1	0	10	6	7
Kingston City	3	2	0	1	14	4	6
Nunawading City FC	3	2	0	1	12	8	6
Springvale City	3	2	0	1	7	10	6
Peninsula Strikers	3	1	2	0	5	2	5
South Springvale	3	1	1	1	6	2	4
Fitzroy City	3	1	1	1	6	5	4
Mornington	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Croydon City Arrows	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Brandon Park	3	1	0	2	6	10	3
North Caulfield	3	0	1	2	3	11	1
Waverley Wanderers	3	0	0	3	3	12	0

PROVI 1 NORTH WEST

Seniors

Melbourne City 2 North City Lions 0, North Sunshine Eagles 0 Avondale Heights 2 (J Saad M Principato), Northern Falcons 1 Elwood City 1, South Yarra 1 (AD Brown) FC Strathmore 1 (T Domjancic), Westvale 1 Laverton Park 2, Whittlesea Utd 3 Corio 2

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Laverton Park	3	3	0	0	8	1	9
Whittlesea Utd	3	3	0	0	10	4	9
Avondale Heights	3	3	0	0	6	0	9
Corio	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
FC Strathmore	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
North Sunshine Eagles	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Melbourne City	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Westvale	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Northern Falcons	3	1	1	1	2	3	1
Elwood City	3	0	1	2	2	6	1
South Yarra	3	0	1	2	1	7	1
North City Lions	3	0	0	3	2	9	0

Reserves

Melbourne City 0 North City Lions 2, North Sunshine Eagles 2 Avondale Heights 1, Northern Falcons 1 Elwood City 3, South Yarra 2 FC Strathmore 3, Westvale 0 Laverton Park 2, Whittlesea Utd 0 Corio 0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Whittlesea Utd	3	2	1	0	6	0	7
North Sunshine Eagles	3	2	1	0	8	4	7
North City Lions	3	2	0	1	6	2	6
Avondale Heights	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
FC Strathmore	3	2	0	1	5	6	6
Corio	3	1	2	0	5	1	5
Laverton Park	3	1	0	2	3	3	3
South Yarra	3	1	0	2	5	6	3
Elwood City	3	1	0	2	8	10	3
Westvale	3	1	0	2	4	8	3
Melbourne City	3	1	0	2	4	10	3
Northern Falcons	3	0	0	3	4	11	-3

PROVI 1 SOUTH EAST

Seniors

Warragul Utd 7 (P Cooper 4 M Griffin 3) Old Camberwell Grammar 0, Beaumaris 0 Sandringham City 0, Boroondara Eagles 1 Doveton 1 (J Rand), Monash University 1 (R Nation) Old Melburnians 1 (E Meade), Monbulk 1 (J Kennedy) Dandenong Sparrows 2 (T Ithier D Ithier), Old Scotch 3 (J Choi 2 J Beamish) Mooroolbark 0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Old Scotch	3	2	0	1	6	2	6
Old Camberwell Grammar	3	2	0	1	4	7	6
Warragul Utd	3	1	2	0	11	4	5
Monbulk	3	1	1	1	6	6	4
Mooroolbark	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Dandenong Sparrows	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Beaumaris	3	1	1	1	2	3	4
Doveton	3	1	1	1	2	3	4
Old Melburnians	3	0	3	0	6	6	3
Sandringham City	3	0	2	1	3	5	2
Monash University	2	0	1	1	4	4	1
Boroondara Eagles	2	0	1	1	4	6	1

Reserves

Warragul Utd 0 Old Camberwell Grammar 1, Beaumaris 2 Sandringham City 3, Boroondara Eagles 2 Doveton 2, Monash University 0 Old Melburnians 1, Monbulk 2 Dandenong Sparrows 4, Old Scotch 0 Mooroolbark 4

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Old Camberwell Grammar	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Old Melburnians	3	3	0	0	6	2	9
Dandenong Sparrows	3	2	1	0	10	7	7
Monash University	3	2	0	1	9	3	6
Mooroolbark	3	2	0	1	5	1	6
Doveton	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Sandringham City	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Monbulk	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Old Scotch	3	1	0	2	2	7	3
Warragul Utd	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Boroondara Eagles	3	0	1	2	3	9	1
Beaumaris	3	0	0	3	7	11	0

PROVI 2 NORTH WEST

Seniors

Bell Park 3 (RJ Antoine 2 N Hopper) Melbourne Tornado 1 (R Blazevic), Collingwood City 1 (F Papoutsis) Hoppers Crossing 2 (K Smart), Lalor Utd 1 West Preston 0, Melton 1 Plenty Valley Lions 0, Moreland Utd 2 (A Babo 2) Western Eagles 1 (R Chelchowski), Surf Coast 3 (MJ Roberts I Crane 2) Epping City 1

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Western Eagles	3	2	0	1	8	4	6
Plenty Valley Lions	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Surf Coast	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Epping City	3	2	0	1	6	5	6
West Preston	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Hoppers Crossing	3	2	0	1	4	4	6
Melton	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Moreland Utd	3	2	0	1	4	3	3
Bell Park	3	1	0	2	6	6	3
Lalor Utd	3	1	0	2	3	8	3
Collingwood City	3	0	1	2	3	5	1
Melbourne Tornado	3	0	0	3	3	7	0

Reserves

Bell Park 4 Melbourne Tornado 1, Collingwood City 4 Hoppers Crossing 0, Lalor Utd 1 West Preston 2, Melton 4 Plenty Valley Lions 1, Moreland Utd 2 Western Eagles 0, Surf Coast 3 Epping City 0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
West Preston	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
Collingwood City	3	2	0	1	11	7	6
Melton	3	2	0	1	9	7	6
Surf Coast	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Epping City	3	1	1	1	10	7	4
Bell Park	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Plenty Valley Lions	3	1	1	1	5	7	4
Hoppers Crossing	3	1	1	1	4	6	4
Lalor Utd	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Moreland Utd	3	1	1	1	5	4	1
Western Eagles	3	0	1	2	0	3	1
Melbourne Tornado	3	0	0	3	4	14	0

PROVI 2 SOUTH EAST

Seniors

Skye Utd 3 (A Busuttil M Vella F Dimu) Caulfield Cobras 0, Endeavour Utd 1 (HS Garcha) Uni. of Melbourne 0, Whitehorse Utd 1 (L Marrone) Berwick Kings 1 (J Melendez-Valdez), Old Carey 0 Lyndale Utd 1, Old Brighton Grammarians 4 (J Salvage M Cameron) Riversdale 2 (R Halliday 2), Bayside Argonauts 1 Ashburton 2

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Ashburton	3	2	1	0	8	2	7
Skye Utd	3	2	0	1	8	4	6
Old Brighton Grammarians	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Riversdale	3	2	0	1	9	8	6
Bayside Argonauts	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Berwick Kings	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Endeavour Utd	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Whitehorse Utd	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Old Carey	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
Uni. of Melbourne	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Lyndale Utd	3	1	0	2	1	6	3
Caulfield Cobras	3	0	1	2	2	7	1

Reserves

Skye Utd 1 Caulfield Utd 4, Endeavour Utd 0 Uni. of Melbourne 1, Whitehorse Utd 2 Berwick Kings 5, Old Carey 4 Lyndale Utd 0, Old Brighton Grammarians 0 Riversdale 2, Bayside Argonauts 0 Ashburton 3

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Caulfield Utd	3	3	0	0	10	2	9
Ashburton	3	3	0	0	7	1	9
Riversdale	3	3	0	0	6	2	9
Berwick Kings	3	2	0	1	11	6	6
Lyndale Utd	3	2	0	1	10	5	6
Old Carey	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
Endeavour Utd	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Uni. of Melbourne	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
Old Brighton Grammarians	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Skye Utd	3	0	1	2	4	8	1
Whitehorse Utd	3	0	0	3	4	12	0
Bayside Argonauts	3	0	0	3	0	13	0

PROVI 3 NORTH WEST

Seniors

Mill Park 0 Northern Roosters 2 (DJ Quaglieri M Kocaayon), Youth Utd 1 (I Ozdamar) Brimbank Stallions 1, Brunswick Zebras 1 (P Montagna) Darebin Utd 3 (S Nicolaidis C Tsalkos T Jones-Roberts), Bundoora Utd 0 Watsonia Heights 2 (R Duerden 2), Keilor Wolves 2 Meadow Park Eagles 1, Upfield 2 (HE Kakos H Al Kaisi) Balmoral 1 (A Bogucanin)

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Darebin Utd	3	3	0	0	10	3	9
Watsonia Heights	3	3	0	0	7	0	9
Upfield	3	3	0	0	9	3	9
Northern Roosters	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
Youth Utd	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Keilor Wolves	3	1	1	1	5	8	4
Mill Park	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
Brimbank Stallions	3	0	2	1	6	10	2
Meadow Park Eagles	3	0	1	2	2	4	1
Bundoora Utd	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Brunswick Zebras	3	0	1	2	1	4	1
Balmoral	3	0	1	2	3	7	1

Reserves

Mill Park 2 Northern Roosters 2, Youth Utd 4 Brimbank Stallions 2, Brunswick Zebras 0 Darebin Utd 0, Bundoora Utd 0 Watsonia Heights 1, Keilor Wolves 4 Meadow Park Eagles 3, Upfield 6 Balmoral 0

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Watsonia Heights	3	3	0	0	10	1	9
Upfield	3	2	1	0	19	4	7
Youth Utd	3	2	0	1	6	5	6
Balmoral	3	2	0	1	3	7	6
Brunswick Zebras	3	1	2	0	7	1	5
Darebin Utd	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Brimbank Stallions	3	1	1	1	9	9	4
Keilor Wolves	3	1	0	2	6	12	3
Bundoora Utd	3	0	2	1	3	4	2
Northern Roosters	3	0	2	1	4	6	2
Mill Park	3	0	1	2	3	11	1
Meadow Park Eagles	3	0	0	3	3	14	0

PROVI 3 SOUTH EAST

Seniors

Essendon Royals 2 (D Costabile I Hussien) Glen Waverley 2 (P Kelly JA Reed), Noble Park 0 Brighton 2 (A Greatorex), Old Trinity Grammarians 2 (TP Miller DJ Vissaritis) Manningham 0, Rowville Eagles 1 (W Teles) East Bentleigh 1 (D Ballan), Seaford Utd 0 Eltham Redbacks 5 (D Oehme BW Mulcahy 3 S Rakhra), White Star Dandenong 3 (I Styczen 2) Keysborough 1 (H Tran)

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Essendon Royals	3	2	1	0	8	4	7
Eltham Redbacks	3	2	0	1	8	3	6
Keysborough	3	2	0	1	7	4	6
White Star Dandenong	3	2	0	1	7	4	6
Seaford Utd	3	2	0	1	8	6	6
Brighton	3	2	0	1	4	4	6
East Bentleigh	3	1	1	1	4	6	4
Old Trinity Grammarians	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Noble Park	3	1	0	2	4	7	3
Rowville Eagles	3	1	1	1	5	5	1
Glen Waverley	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Manningham	3	0	0	3	3	10	0

Reserves

Essendon Royals 1 Glen Waverley 6, Noble Park 4 Brighton 1, Old Trinity Grammarians 3 Manningham 3, Rowville Eagles 2 (D Pop L Miftode) East Bentleigh 0, Seaford Utd 1 Eltham Redbacks 0, White Star Dandenong 0 Keysborough 3

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Seaford Utd	3	3	0	0	10	2	9
Old Trinity Grammarians	3	2	1	0	15	4	7
Noble Park	3	2	1	0	8	3	7
Glen Waverley	3	2	0	1	12	3	6
Brighton	3	2	0	1	7	7	6
Keysborough	3	1	1	1	7	6	4
Rowville Eagles	3	2	0	1	6	6	3
White Star Dandenong	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Eltham Redbacks	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Manningham	3	0	1	2	5	9	1
East Bentleigh	3	0	0	3	1	11	0
Essendon Royals	3	0	0	3	2	19	0

Victorian State & Provisional League Scoreboard brought to you by

LAIKI BANK

ROUND 4 FIXTURES

All matches to be played on Saturday 1st May with 3pm KO unless otherwise stated.

State NW 2
Port Melbourne v Brunswick City
SS Anderson Reserve Fri 30 Apr KO 8:30PM
Altona East Phoenix v Ballarat Red Devils
Paisley Park
Banyule City v Werribee City
Yallambie Park Reserve
Geelong Rangers v Altona City
Myers Reserve
Moreland City v Williamstown
Campbell Reserve
Sydenham Park v Whittlesea Ranges
Keilor Lodge Reserve

State SE 2
Doncaster Rovers v Southern Suburbs
Anderson Park Fri 30 Apr KO 8:30PM
Casey Comets v Heatherton Utd
Comets Stadium
Berwick City v Eastern Lions
Jack Thomas Reserve
Diamond Valley Utd v Knox City
Partington Flats
Southern Stars v Dandenong City
Ross Reserve
Morwell Pegasus v Frankston Pines
Ronald Reserve

State NW 3
Cairnlea v La Trobe University
Cairnlea Park
Hume Utd v Melb University Rangers
Laura Douglas Reserve
Lalor v Keilor Park
RGC Cook Reserve
Sunbury Utd v Yarraville Glory
Langama Park
Essendon Utd v Maribyrnong Greens
Aberfeldie Park
Westgate v Geelong
Ardeer Reserve Sat 1 May KO 7:00PM

State SE 3
Brandon Park v Nunawading City FC
Freeway Reserve
Peninsula Strikers v Mornington
Centenary Park
Noble Park Utd v Springvale City
Parkfield Reserve
Waverley Wanderers v Croydon City Arrows
Carlson Ave Reserve
North Caulfield v Fitzroy City
Caulfield Park Sun 2 May KO 3:00PM
Kingston City v South Springvale
The Grange Reserve Mon 3 May KO 8:30PM

Provi NW 1
Avondale Heights v Northern Falcons
Doyle Street Reserve
Corio v Melbourne City
Hume Reserve, Geelong North
Elwood City v Whittlesea Utd
Elwood Park
FC Strathmore v Westvale
Strathnaver Reserve
Laverton Park SC v North Sunshine Eagles
Laverton Park Reserve
North City Lions v South Yarra
Wallace Reserve

Provi SE 1
Dandenong Sparrows v Monash University
Fotheringham Reserve
Doveton v Old Scotch
Waratah Reserve
Mooroolbark v Beaumaris
Esther Park Reserve
Old Camberwell Grammar v Monbulk
Deepdene Park
Old Melburnians v Boroondara Eagles
Robert Menzies Reserve
Sandringham City v Warragul Utd
RJ Sillitoe Reserve

Provi NW 2
Epping City v Bell Park Duffy
Street Reserve
Hoppers Crossing v Surf Coast
Grange Reserve
Melbourne Tornado v Lalor Utd
Newmarket Reserve
Plenty Valley Lions v Collingwood City
Sycamore Reserve
West Preston v Moreland Utd
Oulton Reserve
Western Eagles v Melton
Polish Sports & Recreation Centre

Provi SE 2
Riversdale v Endeavour Utd
Frog Hollow Reserve
Ashburton v Old Carey
Ashburton Park
Berwick Kings v Bayside Argonauts
Betula Park
Caulfield Cobras v Old Brighton Grammarians
Victory Park
Lyndale Utd v Skye Utd
Lyndale Secondary College
Uni. Of Melbourne Blues SC v Whitehorse Utd
Princes Park (Parkville)

Provi NW 3
Balmoral v Keilor Wolves
Arthur Beachley Reserve
Brimbank Stallions v Bundoora Utd
Club Italia Sporting Club
Darebin Utd v Upfield Mayer Park
Meadow Park Eagles v Youth Utd
Gladstone Park Reserve
Watsonia Heights v Mill Park
Gabonia Reserve
Northern Roosters v Brunswick Zebras
Gibb Reserve

Provi SE 3
East Bentleigh v Essendon Royals
Bailey Reserve
Manningham v Rowville Eagles
Timber Ridge Reserve
Keysborough v Seaford Utd
Coomoora Reserve
Brighton v White Star Dandenong
Dendy Park
Glen Waverley FC v Noble Park
Larpent Reserve
Eltham Redbacks v Old Trinity Grammarians
Eltham North Reserve Sat 1 May KO 7:00PM

Traffic jam at top of SL1

By Aritro Abedin

Langwarrin 3 Clifton Hill 2

Langwarrin took home the spoils in a pulsating encounter against Ivan Jolic's visiting Clifton Hill that was loaded with incidents.

The visitors' decision to play three at the back in the first half left them exposed to Langwarrin's potent threat from the flanks with Matt Durand and Caleb Nicholes getting on the scoresheet as the home side found themselves 2-0 up after 30 minutes.

However, a switch to a conventional 4-4-2 formation saw the visitors create a number of excellent chances after the break, and they managed to restore parity by the 60th minute with Steve Mancheski and Jose Portillo making the most of some high quality attacking play and adding their names to the scoresheet. However indiscipline was to prove their downfall as a sending off late in the game allowed Joe Harris to seal the win for his side with 10 minutes left to play.

Clifton Hill coach Ivan Jolic rued his side's indiscipline saying 'it should have been a draw on the balance of the match. I'm really disappointed with the way it ended, especially after the position we were in getting the two goals back. We've now cost ourselves two games because of red cards and it's not acceptable.' However, he was upbeat about the team's prospects for the season. 'We've been playing beautiful football and we have enough quality to score goals every week. We just need to overcome these problems with indiscipline because we're the highest scoring team in the league and when you score at 2 goals a game the way we have, you really should be winning.'

Pascoe Vale 0 Fawkner Blues 2

The visiting Fawkner Blues fought out a 2-0 win over Pascoe Vale at Hosken Reserve with Rob Dolevski making the most of a 5th minute free-kick that rebounded off the post before Orhan Kara popped up in the 70th minute to head in a well-taken corner to kill of the home side's chances.

Fawkner coach Ken Murphy was happy with his team's clinical finishing saying 'it was an even game, but we took our chances and they didn't.' Last week's 3-0 reverse against Langwarrin forced a tactical reshuffle with Kara being brought in to shore up the defence, and the Blues certainly reaped the benefits of the change with an accomplished defensive effort that kept Pascoe Vale at bay. 'We tried to sit back and let them come at us and hit them on the break and the defence worked really hard, they were a lot tighter than they were last week. Pascoe Vale are a very hard working side, but they're not necessarily a great footballing side so we just wanted to sit back and then hit them.'

The Blues finished last week's encounter with 6 teenagers on the pitch and Murphy was pleased with the effort from his young players on the night. 'Sahin and Luka Anifaloyin are both 19 and they were among our best players, especially Anifaloyin who had a super game. He's a Visa player and he's really come in and made a difference. We've had some financial difficulties so we've tried to promote youth at the club and once they get some consistency they're going to be a strong team.'

Malvern City vs Whittlesea Zebras 0-2

Whittlesea Zebras opened their account for the season with a 2-0 win away at Malvern City in a welcome result for the club after consecutive losses in the opening two weeks of the season.

Captain Greg Lombardo opened the scoring in the 25th minute as the Zebras surprised the home side with an excellent counter-attack from a defensive corner that saw them bearing down on the Malvern goal with a three on two advantage. Lombardo made no mistake as he latched onto the through-ball and slid his shot past the despairing keeper to make it 1-0.

Whittlesea then sealed the match 10 minutes before the end with a wonderfully fluid attacking phase featuring several one-two passing exchanges before it fell in the path of 19 year old ace Simon Tolli who finished the move off beautifully with a diagonal shot past the outstretched keeper.

Zebras coach Gianfranco Impellizzeri was relieved with the result. 'After losing two games in a row, we went in intending to pick up the three points. We were organized a little bit better this week and we took all our opportunities. The boys did well to get the three points away and we can build from here. We've got a young side and we'll get better each week.' He also singled out young scorer Simon Tolli for praise. 'He's a very nippy player, and he spent some time in the Melbourne Victory youth program. He's definitely one to watch.'

St.Albans and Western Suburbs also fought out an entertaining local derby encounter at Churchill Reserve with Josip Locaric and Jozeljic scoring for the home side.

Greg Lombardo (Whittlesea) gets the better of Richaes Swingkler (Malvern) in the air. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

Jozeljic equalizes for the Saints. PHOTO: STEVE STAREK

Whittlesea keeper Robert Santilli seems to be having trouble getting hold of the ball under pressure from Malvern's Paul Madondo. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

SL1 RESULTS

Langwarrin 3
(M Durand C Nicholes J Harris)
FC Clifton Hill 2
(S Manceski J Portillo)

Pascoe Vale 0
Fawkner Blues 2
(O Kara R Dolevski)

Malvern City 0
Whittlesea Zebras 2
(G Lombardo S Tolli)

St Albans Saints 2
(J Loncaric G Jozeljic)
Western Suburbs 2
(A Khrapko 2)

Under 21s:
Langwarrin 2 FC Clifton Hill 0, Pascoe Vale 3 Fawkner Blues 1, Malvern City 2 Whittlesea Zebras 2, St Albans Saints 3 Western Suburbs 3

SL1 NEXT ROUND

Round 4

Nh Geelong Warriors v Malvern City
Elcho Park
Fri 30 Apr KO 8:30PM

Fawkner Blues v St Albans Saints
CB Smith Reserve
Sat 1 May KO 3:00PM

FC Clifton Hill v Pascoe Vale
Kevin Bartlett Reserve
Sat 1 May KO 3:00PM

Whittlesea Zebras v Langwarrin
Epping Soccer Stadium
Sun 2 May KO 3:00PM

Preston Lions v FC Bulleen Lions
BT Connor Reserve
Sun 2 May KO 3:00PM

Western Suburbs v Springvale White Eagles
Ralph Reserve
Sun 2 May KO 3:00PM

SL1 LADDER

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Bulleen Lions	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
Langwarrin	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Pascoe Vale	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Fawkner Blues	3	2	0	1	4	4	6
Springvale White E	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Western Suburbs	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
FC Clifton Hill	3	1	0	2	6	5	3
Whittlesea Zebras	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
St Albans Saints	3	1	2	0	7	5	2
Nth Geelong Warriors	2	0	2	0	3	3	2
Preston Lions	2	0	0	2	1	5	0
Malvern City	3	0	0	3	0	8	0

SL1 LADDER

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pascoe Vale	3	3	0	0	13	2	9
FC Bulleen Lions	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Nth Geelong Warriors	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Langwarrin	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
Western Suburbs	3	1	1	1	4	9	4
Springvale White E	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Fawkner Blues	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Whittlesea Zebras	3	0	2	1	2	3	2
St Albans Saints	3	1	1	1	7	7	1
FC Clifton Hill	3	0	1	2	1	5	1
Malvern City	3	0	1	2	4	9	1
Preston Lions	2	0	0	2	3	8	0

To complete the round in SL1, two games will be played tonight (Monday 26th April).
Bulleen Lions has a chance to take outright lead in the standings when it takes on North Geelong at the Veneto Club, KO 8.30pm.
While, Springvale White Eagles hosts Preston Lions at White Eagles Stadium, KO 8.30pm.

Coast keeps the fire burning

By Jarrod Ellis

Bundaberg Spirit have long been viewed as the whipping boys of the QSL competition and so far this season, despite much improved play on their 2009 performances, once again find themselves rooted to the bottom the ladder.

Coach Richard Mitchell would have stressed to his side the importance of putting in a solid performance against competition heavyweights Brisbane Strikers after suffering a humiliating 10-0 loss the last time the Spirit hosted the 2009 Premiers at Martens Oval.

With goals so readily on offer last time these sides met it was no real surprise that Brisbane Coach Stuart McLaren went with an attacking 4-3-3 formation that almost saw results soon after the kick-off.

In a worrying sign for the home support Bundaberg keeper Ben Heidenrich had to be on his game early as Michael Angus tested him from outside the area with a vicious shot.

Heidenrich would be unable to rise to the occasion in the 13th minute though as Matt Thurtell opened the scoring for the visitors. Thurtell capitalised on a lobbed through ball that caught the Bundaberg defence napping, allowing the Brisbane forward to break onto the ball. Heidenrich seeing that his defence had been breached raced out of the box in an effort to get to the ball first but was slow off his line and Thurtell simply lobbed the ball over the helpless keeper.

The Spirit responded quickly, with a ball played through the inside-right channel for Corey Haack causing the Strikers' defence some consternation. But Striker's keeper Brendan White was quicker to react to danger than his counterpart had been and he got down in front of Haack's feet to smother his shot.

The Brisbane wide men were causing Bundaberg's fullbacks all kind of problems but the home side defended resolutely, weathering a prolonged period or pressure from the Strikers.

Bundaberg were unlucky not to find themselves on level terms at mid way through the first half. Brisbane defender Matija Simic was forced to clear the ball off the line after Bundaberg forward Aaron Bakker rounded the keeper after besting the Striker's defence in a race to a long ball from deep in the Spirit's half.

The Spirit continued to fight and the equaliser did come six minutes before the half after a lapse in concentration from Brisbane.

Bundaberg midfielder Mitchell Broom caught Michael Angus with the ball on the edge of the Brisbane area after the visitors had failed a clearance, dispossessing him with a strong challenge. From there Broom dribbled into the penalty area and dispatched a shot low into the corner of White's goal as the Brisbane defence protested vehemently to the referee that Angus had been fouled. The officials were having nothing of it though and the two sides went into the break on level footing with momentum having swung firmly back in the home sides favour.

Perhaps it was a sense of injustice about the equaliser that spurred Brisbane on, but as the second half kicked off it was clear that there was now an extra edge to the Strikers' play.

Only two minutes after the restart Sean Burke restored the visitor's lead, a lobbed through ball once again proving the undoing of the Bundaberg defence. The goal was much the same as Brisbane's first, this time Burke seizing on a slow defence and putting the ball low and to the left of a desperately advancing Heidenrich.

Bundaberg responded momentarily with a thirty-yard drive from Laurie Stephenson that forced White to dive to his left to make a save, but it was Brisbane that would score next in the 50th minute after a calamitous piece of play from Bundaberg's Tom Kimber.

Kimber got his bearings hopelessly wrong in trying to deal with a long ball from the Strikers' right touchline. Kimber was not under any sort of challenge as the ball came across to the back post but, facing his own goal, he stabbed out a foot and volleyed the ball gently back across his penalty area to where Thurtell was lurking. The blond striker could barely believe his luck, but completed the formalities in tucking the ball past the exposed Heidenreich for a 3-1 scoreline.

With Bundaberg's self belief fading Thurtell completed his hat-trick in 63rd minute once again running onto a long ball to score, a tactic that Bundaberg's defence somehow seemed to have never encountered before for all the good they did in defending against.

The final goal of the game came courtesy of an excellent effort from Brisbane's Brad McDonald. After jinking run from deep McDonald exchanged a one-two with Angus, putting McDonald into the Bundaberg penalty area where he shielded the ball before turning and dribbling past another defender, holding off two further challengers before poking the ball past the befuddled Heidenreich.

Overall a much improved performance from Bundaberg against Brisbane, with the 5-1 score line perhaps giving the Strikers too much credit for a hard fought match.

Elsewhere around the league FNQ Bulls continued their thoroughly impressive start to the season with a 3-2 home victory over Capricorn Cougars. Substitute Josh De Nittis proved the hero for the home side, giving his side the lead with ten minutes to go, only two after Fergus McIntosh had managed to pull the Cougars level.

The win sees the Bulls remain in second place on the ladder, three points behind competition leaders Sunshine Coast who continued their unbeaten start to the season against Whitsunday Miners.

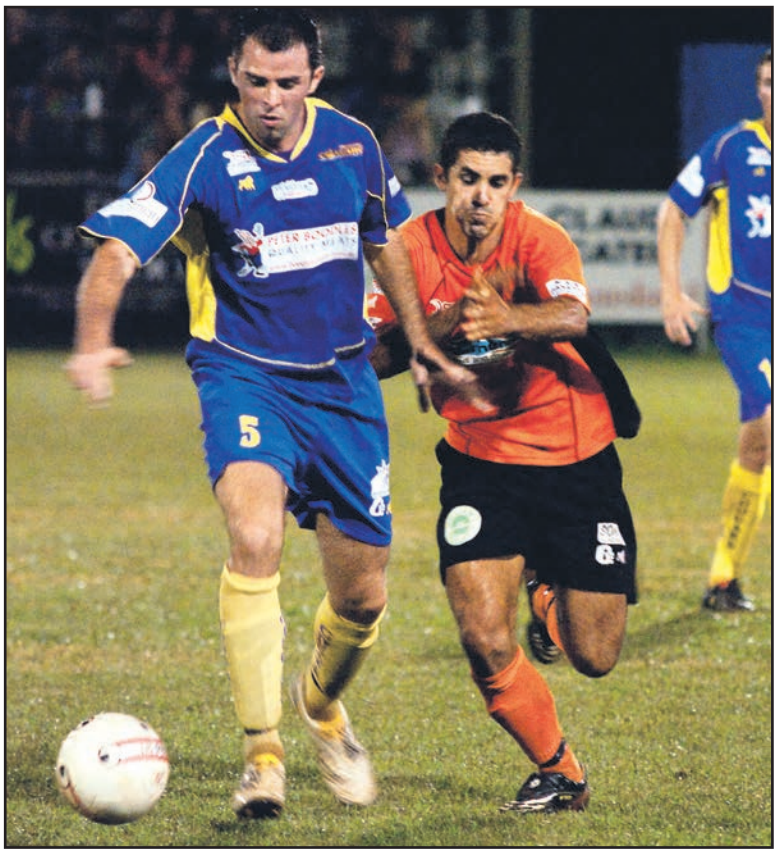
Demonstrating their attacking strength in depth, the Fire had four different scorers as they downed the Miners 4-1 at Stockland Park. Jai Cross, Sam Knight, Yuta Gonai and Aaron Brazendale all got their names on the scoresheet, whilst Daniel Scotton scored what turned out to be a consolation goal for the visitors shortly after half time.

The result leaves Whitsunday level bottom of the ladder with Bundaberg Spirit, albeit with a game in hand against QAS.

QAS themselves had another week to forget as they were crushed 4-1 by a Razorbacks side that is looking as though it may be finding some consistency, a trait many of their fans will welcome. QAS have found a form of consistency of their own as they let in all four goals over a period of only nineteen minutes.

This follows a week after a 7-4 loss at the hands of FNQ Bulls where the youngsters somehow managed to concede six goals in nine minutes. The trend of bunches of goals conceded by the QAS defence doesn't stop there as back in Round 2 despite leading 3-2 with only ten minutes to go against Sunshine Coast they went on to lose 5-3, Fire's Japanese import Yuta Gonai scoring a ten-minute hat-trick.

Perhaps QAS coach David Abela should attempt to convince Brisbane Strikers to loan him the services of their new recruit, Australian defender Craig Moore so he can impart some defensive advice to his young side.



David Ruiz (FNQ Bulls striker) scorer of the winning goal, does battle with David Thomas (Cap Cougar) PHOTO: JIM HATCHMAN

LADDER

	P	W	D	L	For	Ag	GD	Pts
1 Sunshine Coast	5	5	0	0	19	9	10	15
2 FNQ Bulls	5	4	0	1	16	11	5	12
3 NQ Razorbacks	5	3	1	1	8	4	4	10
4 Brisbane Strikers	5	3	0	2	10	5	5	9
5 Capricorn Cougars	5	1	1	3	5	8	-3	4
6 Qld AS	4	1	0	3	9	16	-7	3
7 Whitsunday Miners	4	0	1	3	1	8	-7	1
8 Bundaberg Spirit	5	0	1	4	2	9	-7	1

NEXT ROUND

ROUND 6

Brisbane Strikers v FNQ Bulls
Sat 1 May 7:00pm

Whitsunday Miners v Bundaberg Spirit
Sat 1 May 7:30pm

NQ Razorbacks v Sunshine Coast FC
Sat 1 May 7:30pm

Capricorn Cougars v QAS
Sun 2 May 2:00pm

RESULTS

Bundaberg Spirit 1
Brisbane Strikers FC 5

FNQ Bulls 3
Capricorn Cougars 2

Sunshine Coast FC 4
Whitsunday Miners 1

Queensland Academy of Sport 1
NQ McDonald's Razorbacks 4

Home and (very far) away...

By Kane Frampton

Over the three-season history of the Hyundai Queensland State League (QSL), the competition has been touted as a true state-wide enterprise.

The league comprises teams from as far north as Cairns (FNQ Bulls), and as far south as Brisbane (Brisbane Strikers and QAS), two cities with approximately 1700 kilometres of coastline in between.

The QSL has proved a resounding success in allowing elite players from regional areas the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to the entire state, where previously they would have been consigned to local leagues.

However, this opportunity comes as at a cost, as over the course of a season each team is required to travel to a number of away games, often only a short bus trip away. However, when far north meets far south, a significant time and financial investment is required by club and players alike to make the trip.

In the case of the Sunshine Coast Fire, current QSL league leader and 2008 champions, the team is growing accustomed to making long journeys for away fixtures.

Current Fire club captain Shaun Blackman has played for the club in all three seasons, and is aware that considerable time and effort is required by club staff to make such trips a reality.

"It is not cheap for the club to find the money to fly the boys around the state, and a lot of work goes on before the team takes the field each week," Blackman said.

The amount of effort and organisation required from players and staff alike cannot be underestimated.

In Round 3 of 2009, The Fire made a 1500km journey north to take on the Far North Queensland Bulls, a team based out of Mareeba. It took approximately 12 hours for the team to travel by bus to Brisbane Airport, fly north to Cairns, and then travel west by bus to Mareeba to arrive at the ground two hours before kick-off. Such a journey would be tiring enough on its own, but all the more difficult with a football match at the end of it.

According to Blackman, the team usually opts for a simple preparation when on the road.

"Most times we get to the destination on the morning of the game. Once we have settled in, we will go for a light run to loosen up, and just play small sided games, and then walk around for about 30 minutes. The games can vary in start time from 2pm through to 8pm. Generally, we will stay for at least one night, depending on the game and how far we have to travel."

Despite the considerable time investment, Blackman still gets a thrill out of the Fire's road trips.

"I love it, because it gives you the feeling that you are a professional footballer, and the bond it forms between the team is something special."

For those QSL players who aspire to play football professionally and move on to bigger and better things, away trips can also be useful experience.

"I think they give everyone involved, player or coaching staff alike, the perfect opportunity to prepare for football at a higher level," Blackman said.

For the Sunshine Coast Fire, the first serious road trip of the season takes place on the 1st of May, when the team travels to Brolga Park in Townsville to take on the North Queensland McDonald's Razorbacks.

When the teams last met in Townsville, in Round 13 of 2009, the Sunshine Coast claimed a 3-0 victory. And after winning their first four games of the 2010 season, the Sunshine Coast have every right to believe that they can return with three points in the bag.

The arduous journey north is unlikely to dent their confidence.

Shaun Blackman in action for Sunshine Coast Fire. PHOTO: ROBYN WOODALL

Sydney United go top after blitzing Bankstown

By Mike Salter

A second-half flurry of goals against Bankstown City sent Sydney United top of the NSW Premier League, with Marconi joining them at the summit after a hard-fought 1-0 victory away to Manly United. Details of the former game can be found below.

Erstwhile leaders Blacktown suffered a surprise home loss at the hands of defending champions Sutherland. A goal in each half from Ben Vidaic was enough to deal Blacktown their first defeat of the season.

Rock-bottom APIA-Leichhardt pulled themselves up by the bootstraps with a 4-0 win over the West Sydney Berries, while Sydney Olympic continued their move up the table with a heartening 4-2 win at home to the South Coast Wolves. French striker Cedric Ramirez, once of Lorient, scored his first goal of the season for Olympic.

In the weekend's other game, Bonnyrigg ended Rockdale City's inspired run, defeating the Macedonian-backed club 2-1 at Bicentennial park. The pre-season favourites are only two points off the pace, as the league's top four continue to break away from the pack.

Bankstown City 0-3 Sydney Utd

After a scoreless first half, two defensive lapses and a moment of stunning individual brilliance produced a 3-0 win for Sydney United, who thereby reamin on track for another NSWPL premiership.

After a period of cat-and-mouse in the opening minutes, the visitors had the first chance when an Ante Tomic corner reached Elsid Barkhousir, whose audacious overhead kick whistled over the Bankstown bar. Five minutes later, United captain Joe Vrkic was somewhat lucky to stay on the field when Bankstown's player-coach Peter Tsekenis surged forward from defence and played a neat one-two with Robbie Mileski. Vrkic cynically upended Tsekenis just outside the United box, and Bankstown failed to make an impact with the resulting free kick. Vrkic received only a yellow card.

There were chances at either end as the first period reached its half-way point. Miljan Pavlovic headed over the bar for United, and Bankstown defender Richard Luksic, up for a set-piece, did the same at the other end on 22 minutes.

Young Ante Tomic, intermittently effective, had two decent chances for the visitors in the succeeding minutes. A free kick broke to him on 26 minutes, and he flashed a left-footed shot just wide of the goal; then United broke away following a Bankstown corner, Peter Markovic sent a splendid ball over the top to Tomic on the left, but the youngster's hasty volley flew over the bar. There was time for a half-chance for Mileski on 45 minutes, and then an inconclusive first half was at an end.

Although United had the first chance of the second half, Pavlovic bullocking his way through the Bankstown backline before forcing a good save from Zlatko Joseski, Bankstown called the tune for ten minutes thereafter. Hussein Salameh broke through on the left and had a shot blocked on 54 minutes, and George Nohra and Steve Liavas both sent powerful shots into United flesh following the resultant corner. At the other end, a swift piece of control from United player-coach David Zdrilic allowed him to get a shot away just before the hour, but Joseski was alert to the danger.

The game ultimately turned on an injury to Tsekenis on the hour. Initially the veteran attempted to continue, but eventually he needed to be taken off the field for treatment. In his absence, Bankstown failed to plug the resultant gap in defence: Tomic advanced down the left and sent in an accurate cross, and Barkhousir, completely unmarked at the far post, was able to nod the ball home with ease.

Bankstown were galvanised into life, and made a concerted assault on the United goal in the minutes following the opener, but United responded with a killer punch in the 66th minute. A dazzling, sustained run by Tomic along the right touchline saw him shimmy past two Bankstown defenders; Joseski finally managed to halt his run, but only by deflecting the ball into the path of Pavlovic, who finished impressively from the edge of the box.

A minute later, and it was three. Shannon Burgin, who had recently arrived as a substitute for Tsekenis, clumsily gave the ball away to Pavlovic, and the former Newcastle Jets striker calmly played in Barkhousir on the right. The winger made no mistake, notching his second goal of the night.

The game was clearly over, and although Bankstown created some chances at the minutes ticked away, United never looked in any danger of surrendering their lead. A cross-shot from Scott Thomas drifted wide on 69 minutes, and Hussein Akil had a free kick deflected just over the United bar as Bankstown sought some consolation.

It never came. It was, in fact, United who went closest to another goal, when Zdrilic touched a Pavlovic cross aside for Tomic on 79 minutes. This time, the teenager could not replicate his earlier brilliance, shanking his shot badly.

Not that it made any difference. United coasted home to secure the three points and equal top spot on the ladder.

Rockdale City Suns players celebrate
PHOTO: CARLOS FURTADO/FNSW

NSW action between Sutherland Sharks and Blacktown City.
PHOTO: CARLOS FURTADO/FNSW

More action from the NSW Premier League.
PHOTO: CARLOS FURTADO/FNSW

NSW LADDER

	P	W	L	Pts
Sydney United	9	6	1	20
Marconi Stallions	9	6	1	20
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	9	5	1	18
Blacktown City FC	9	5	1	18
Rockdale City Suns	9	3	2	13
Sutherland Sharks	9	3	5	10
Sydney Olympic	9	3	5	10
Manly United FC	9	2	4	9
Bankstown City	9	2	5	8
South Coast Wolves	9	2	5	8
West Sydney Berries	9	2	5	8
APIA Leichhardt Tigers	9	2	6	7

NSW RESULTS

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE: ROUND 9: FIRST GRADE: Rockdale City Suns 1 (Sam Awad 53m) Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 (Bradley Boardman 38/58m), Manly United 0 Marconi Stallions 1 (Jason Naidovski 70m), APIA Leichhardt Tigers 4 (Hirofuni Moriyasu 31/75m Nicola Rizzo 42m Robert Younis 53m) West Sydney Berries 0, Sydney Olympic 4 (Chris Triantis 8m Cedric Ramirez 16/72m Phillip Makrys 81m) South Coast Wolves 2 (Mark Picciolini 30/40m), Blacktown City FC 0 Sutherland Sharks 2 (Ben Vidaic 32/54m), Bankstown City Lions 0 Sydney United 3 (Elsid Barkhousir 59/67m Mirjan Pavlovic 66m).

GRADE 20: Rockdale City Suns 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Manly United 1 Marconi Stallions 2, APIA Leichhardt Tigers 5 West Sydney Berries 1, Sydney Olympic 2 South Coast Wolves 1, Blacktown City FC 2 Sutherland Sharks 1, Bankstown City Lions 2 Sydney United 1.

GRADE 18: Sydney Olympic 4 South Coast Wolves 4, Blacktown City FC 0 Sutherland Sharks 2.

NSW SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 6: FIRST GRADE: Parramatta Eagles 4 (B Soane 13/24m P Gatt 50m D Fogarty 78m) Fraser Park 0, Northern Tigers 5 (M Simmonds 41/78/80m L Tomich 49m L Dawson 87m) Spirit FC 1 (S Meney 80m).

GRADE 20: Parramatta Eagles 4 Fraser Park 1, Northern Tigers 1 Spirit FC 1.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 6: FIRST GRADE: Inter Lions 3 (D Arcella 34m P Polistina 38/85m) Hurstville ZFC 1 (D Andrade 32m), Gladesville Ryde Magic 3 (T Nastoulis 26m A McKie 30m A Kabbara 77m) Blacktown Spartans 3 (L Wright 48/69m S Falanga 80m), Fairfield City Lions 1 (C Maxwell 88m) Hills Brumbies 3 (P Down 54m T Pannowitz 57m pen D Savic 81m), Camden Tigers 0 Stanmore Hawks 2 (D James 78m W Hijazi 92m).

GRADE 20: Inter Lions 0 Hurstville ZFC 1, Gladesville Ryde Magic 2 Blacktown Spartans 4, Fairfield City Lions 2 Hills Brumbies 1, Camden Tigers 1 Stanmore Hawks 1.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO: ROUND 5: FIRST GRADE: Fairfield Wanderers 1 (M Navarrete 34m) Belmore Hercules 2 (J Skufris 19m D Fernandes 54m), Fairfield Bulls 0 Hakoah 0, Luddenham United 2 (S Andrews 5m M Wood 80m) Gazy Lansvale 1 (M Amed 73m).

GRADE 20: Fairfield Wanderers 4 Belmore Hercules 1, Fairfield Bulls 8 Hakoah 3, Luddenham United 1 Gazy Lansvale 0.

NEXT ROUND

Round 10

7pm Sat 1/May B'rigg White Eagles v Syd Olympic
Bonnyrigg Sports Club
7pm Sat 1/May S'land Sharks v Manly Utd
Seymour Shaw Park
7.30pm Sat 1/May Marconi Stallions v Rockdale C Suns
Marconi Stadium
3pm Sun 2/May Bankstown City v APIA L'hardt Tigers
Jensen Park
3pm Sun 2/May West Syd Berries v Sth Coast Wolves
Sydney Olympic Athletic Centre
3pm Sun 2/May Syd Utd v Blacktown City
Sydney Utd Sports Centre

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Tilford Zebras stay third

By Walter Pless

Tilford Zebras maintained third spot on the Forestry Tasmania Southern Premier League ladder with two wins in a row.

Last Sunday, a goal in injury time by Ben Crosswell gave Zebras a 3-2 away win over fifth-placed New Town Eagles at Clare Street, while this Saturday, Zebras thumped bottom-side Olympia Warriors 5-1 away at South Hobart, with Crosswell netting a hat-trick.

Eagles should probably have won against Zebras, but atrocious finishing and good goalkeeping by Troy Kaden cost them dearly.

Kaden saved at least four one-on-one situations, denying Adam McKeown and Shane Kent, while Alex Leszczynski missed another easy chance.

Crosswell fired Zebras ahead in the 12th minute, following a corner by Jayden Welch, to give the visitors a 1-0 lead at the break.

Eagles were level 15 seconds after the resumption when a poor header back to his goalkeeper by Andrew Telega allowed Leszczynski to nip in and lob the ball over the keeper and into the net.

Crosswell set up Dwayne Walsh for an easy goal in the 55th minute to restore Zebras' lead, but a brave header by McKeown from Mark Page's deep cross from the right in the 63rd minute made it 2-2.

Four minutes into stoppage time, Crosswell scored the winner from the edge of the box with his weaker right-foot.

In last Sunday's other match, goals by Greg Freeman, Marcello Marchioli, with a penalty, and Ryan Bevan gave fourth-placed Kingborough Lions United a 3-0 away win over second-last Taroona at Kelvedon Park.

Crosswell was amongst the goals again on Saturday, scoring two penalties and one goal in open play as Zebras overwhelmed an Olympia side that has now earned just a point from the seven matches in the opening round of the league.

Olympia started strongly and took the lead in the 16th minute through Chris Kumpulainen, who made the most of the service provided by Warren Wadawu.

Ricky Self equalised in the 33rd minute through a simple move by Zebras. Andrew Telega swept the ball out of defence and to the left for Jayden Welch, whose low cross into the penalty area was struck home by Self.

Crosswell made it 2-0 in the 45th minute with a penalty, awarded against Nick Meredith, who pulled Luke Engels's shirt as the youngster worked his way into the box.

Luke Engels chipped goalkeeper Dmitri Nester in the 65th minute after a defensive error by Adam Hedge to make it 3-1, while Crosswell added Zebras' fourth in the 77th minute after a chip by Walsh had unlocked the Olympia defence.

Crosswell finished the scoring in the final minute with his second penalty, this time awarded for Rory McCallum's foul on Kurt Engels.

In the day's other match, Kingborough Lions United drew 1-1 with the visiting Clarence United at Lightwood Park.

Marcus Bremner gave the Lions a 51st minute lead, but Ben Hamlett hit the equaliser nine minutes from the end.

Devonport City became the outright leader in the Forestry Tasmania Northern Premier League after crushing bottom-side Launceston United 9-1 away at Birch Avenue.

Burnie United, who had been the leaders on goal-difference, suffered a shock 3-1 loss away to reigning champions Northern Rangers at the NTCA Ground.

Fifth-placed Ulverstone drew 3-3 away with sixth-ranked Prospect Knights at Harley Parade, while seventh-placed Somerset just squeezed home 4-3 against second-last Launceston City at home at Cardigan Street.

Launceston City went into this game mourning the passing of club stalwart Tommy Strickland last week at the age of 65.

Eagles' Ben Whitehall (left) in a race for the ball with Zebras' Paul Cairns. PHOTO: WALTER PLESS

NORTH RESULTS

Launceston Utd 1 Devonport City 9

Northern Rangers 3 Burnie Utd 1

Prospect Knights 3 Ulverstone 3

Somerset 4 Launceston City 3

SOUTH RESULTS

Kingborough Lions 1 Clarence United 1

Tilford Zebras 5 Hobart Olympia 1

South Hobart 3 New Town Eagles 1

NORTH LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Devonport City	4	4	0	0	20	3	12
Northern Rangers	4	3	1	0	16	6	10
Burnie United	5	3	0	2	24	10	9
Ulverstone	4	2	1	1	13	6	7
Riverside Olympic	4	2	1	1	8	5	7
Prospect Knights	5	2	1	2	12	15	7
Somerset	5	2	0	3	10	18	6
Launceston City	4	0	0	4	5	11	0
Launceston United	5	0	0	5	4	37	0

SOUTH LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Hobart	7	6	1	0	17	3	19
Glenorchy Knights	6	5	0	1	21	9	15
Tilford Zebras	7	4	2	1	17	12	14
Kingborough Lions	7	3	2	2	11	10	11
Clarence United	7	1	3	3	8	14	6
New Town Eagles	7	1	2	4	13	16	5
Taroona	6	1	1	4	9	17	4
Hobart Olympia	7	0	1	6	6	21	1

NEXT ROUND

Round 6

Saturday 1st May
Ulverstone v Northern Rangers *Ulverstone Showgrounds 2.30pm*
Devonport City v Prospect Knights *Valley Road 2.30pm*
Burnie United v Riverside Olympic *Montello 2.30pm*
Launceston City v Launceston United *Mitsubishi Park 6.30pm*
Somerset - *Bye*

NEXT ROUND

Round 8

Saturday 1st May
New Town Eagles v Kingborough Lions *Clare Street 2.30pm*
South Hobart v Tilford Zebras *South Hobart 2.30pm*
Clarence United v Glenorchy Knights *Wentworth Park 2 6.30pm*

Sunday 2nd May
Hobart Olympia v Taroona *South Hobart 2.30pm*

Eagles' Adam McKeown heads the equaliser despite the close attentions of Zebras' keeper Troy Kaden.PHOTO: WALTER PLESS

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Warriors send cup champions packing

By Nat Adamopoulos

Historically all around the world, Cup competitions whether played locally, nationally or Internationally, are renowned for the opportunities they give to the underdog teams to become the giant killers and there were no exceptions with the Federation Cup being played in South Australia on the Anzac Day weekend. Although there were no fairy tale endings this time, there were some super performances by the so-called minnows of local football.

The biggest result and some may even tout as the upset of the round, came from the only night match played where arch rivals Premier League club White City Warriors hosted Cumberland United, the Warriors ousting the reigning Champions with a gallant 2-1 victory at Frank Mitchell Park. The strong crowd were treated to a hard fought match by both sides, a style that most football fans have grown accustomed to when these two club match up against each other. The Foxes were looking good early in the first half, their side strengthened with the return of Captain Danny Greystone to join tall timber Damien Puyenbroek and playing coach Neil Young at the back, warding off the advances made by the Warriors. The Foxes provided most of the attacking action for the first half hour, successfully finding the back of the net in the 38th minute from a free kick lobbed up from midfield for Charlie Bowman to run onto just outside the box, catching it on the bounce and drilling a screamer past the Warriors keeper.

It was a very different White City side that came out after the break, striking fast within 5 minutes of the kick off care of experienced striker Srdjan Jovanovic, his shot beating the young Cumberland keeper Luke Schoen. The Warriors continued to play hard ball, flexing their muscles with hard physical tackles to show that they were not done yet, progressively pushing the reigning champions out of the match. Each time the Foxes turned on their attacking play, the Warriors defence were there to withstand the charge, instead creating their own opportunities to score. The match sealer came in the 84th minute from some clever play in centre midfield, when Jovanovic executed a quick back heel which placed the ball perfectly for Vasilijevic to put boot to ball and into the back of the net. The final whistle brought with it disappointment for the 2009 Champions, but jubilation and hope for the White City faithful, who have had a dismal start to the season.

The Newton Village Sports Complex had a feast full of football, with a double header the order of the day matching up Collegiate clubs with State League and Super League Clubs. The curtain raiser fielded the Collegiate side Rostrevor taking up the challenge to State League club Northern Demons, and take on the challenge they did. It was a fairly nervy first 20 minutes to the match, both sides taking their time to settle into the game with Rostrevor having a chance to take the lead early, their opportunity prevented due to the talented skills of Demons keeper Maurice Mezzino. The Demons created several opportunities to open their goal tally but poor finishing was their arch nemesis. As the game progressed, the collegians were matching up well, putting constant pressure on the Demons side led from the back by their defender and Captain Peter Verricchio and keeper Hayden Ryan. The true grit and hard endeavor of the underdogs proved rewarding, withstanding and putting their own pressure on to take the Demons to extra time after a scoreless 90 minutes. Unfortunately for Rostrevor their inexperience prevailed and the Demons came out eventual winners, putting away 3 goals past the valiant leeper care of Scott Gannon, Adrian Leet and Daniel Cox. Although the result did not go the way of Rostrevor College, they can hold their heads up high with the strong performance they put in both through individuals like Mark Bosio returning after a lengthy 6 year absence from football, their Captain Verricchio and courageous keeper Ryan. The win to the Demons sees them progress through to the next round.

The main game at Newton saw a David and Goliath matchup with Super League big guns Campbelltown City Red Devils against the collegiate club the Adelaide Simba Heroes, an all-african playing team. As would be expected the silky skills and natural football flair that one would expect to see from Africaan players was all there, the opening to the match looking exciting, colourful anticipated spectacle to watch. The spectacle unfortunately for the Adelaide Simbas went the way of the Red Devils, who opened the game up with a goal in the 2nd minute of the match by Ali Toure. The Simba Heroes side showed signs of pure and natural football skills, their speed and ball control, pin point accurate passing and flexibility at times an absolute pleasure to watch. Their lack of being accustomed to sticking to a strict formation, with structure and tactics as their priority was however, the weakness that the Red Devils were able to take advantage of. Campbelltown netted their second goal in the 22nd minute of the match from the boot of Michael Paleka who beat the keeper comprehensively. The Simbas keeper pulled off some lighting quick reflex saves to keep his side in the match and see the score checked at 2-0 as they went in for break. As the heavens opened up with the start of the second half and the showers came down, so the floodgates opened and the goals came thick and fast for the Red Devils. Almost a goal being scored every 3 minutes, the Simba Heroes were getting a huge lesson in what top level football was all about, but never did they waver or reduce their intensity towards the match. Four individual Campbelltown players scored hatricks, Matthew Deegan and Jason Trimboli each bagging four, Pat Barbaro and Alor Bulabek with a triple, and singles to Ali Toure, Michael Paleka and Stanko Zilic, the end result being te Red Devils 17 Adelaide Simba Heroes 0. The most wonderful thing that came out of this match was that eventhough the game was a total mismatch in football levels, the Simba Heroes never gave up. They played with their hearts and their souls a pure, unadulterated game of football, colourful and every smiling, relishing the opportunity they had been given. Hopefully in just over a month's time we will be seeing some of those qualities coming out of the World Cup Competition.

Other results from matches being played around the grounds were Para Hills 3 Western Strikers 2, Pirates 7 Regency Eagles 3, Western District Toros 2 Adelaide Blue Eagles 10, N.A.B. 0 Adelaide Comets 3, Adelaide Cobras 0 MetroStars 4, Seaford 1 Salisbury United 2, Adelaide City 9 South Adelaide 1, Riverland 1 West Adelaide 8, Apollo 0 Modbury 4, Raiders 5 Noarlunga United 3, Adelaide Hills 0 Adelaide Galaxy 1, Adelaide Olympic 0 Croydon 1, Enfield City 10 International 1. Round 2 of the Federation Cup will be played the weekend of May 22nd.

Action from Round 1 Federation Cup: Raiders youngster Craig Goodwin evades Noarlunga defenders on his way to scoring a goal in the 5-3 win.
PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER

SA RESULTS

Men's League – Federation Cup

White City Woodville 2 (M.Vasilijevic, S.Jovanovic)
Cumberland United 1 (C.Bowman) (HT 0-1)
Bst – White City (M.Keens, R.Saraceno, S.Jovanovic)
Cumberland (D.Carter, Schoen, D.Puyenbroek)

Rostrevor 0
Northern Demons 3 (S.Gannon, J.Saler, M.Markovic)
(HT 0-0) (FT 0-) (AET 0-3)
Demons won 3-0 After Extra Time
Best – Rostrevor (H.Ryan, F.Fantasia, M.Bosio) Demons (S.Gannon, A.Leet, D.Cox)

Para Hills 3 (R.Clayton, B.Selga, R.Townsend) Western Strikers 2 (F.DaSilva, J.Spadavecchia) (HT 1-0)
Best – Para Hills
(R.Townsend, A.Mullen, R.Clayton)
Strikers (Y.Sudic, J.Spadavecchia, S.Stefanopoulos)

Pirates 7 (A.Pemberton 2, N.Tattoli 2, J.Mavromatis, J.Coley, C.Adcock)
Regency Eagles 3 (L.Nikora 2, B.Niyongere) (HT 4-1)
Best – Pirates (J.Coley, M.Markham, A.Pemberton)
Regency (F.Niyikiza. B.Niyongere, H.Harerimana)

Toros 2 (R.Racciopi 2)
Adelaide Blue Eagles 10 (S.Parissos 5, L.Sattin, F.Filleti, K.Harris, N.Bucco, E.Kounavelis)
(HT 0-3)
Best – Toros (R.Racciopi, A.Violi, J.Mastropaolo)
Blue Eagles (S.Parissos, F.Filleti, E.Kounavelis)

N.A.B. 0
Adelaide Comets 3 (R.Mitchell 2, N.Fleetwood) (HT 0-2)
Best – N.A.B. (D.Renna, A.Fischetti, M.Saccardo)
Comets (N.Fleetwood, D.Makridis, L.Paterson)

Adelaide Cobras 0
MetroStars 4 (S.Tunbridge 2, J.Groves, A.Ciarla)
(HT 0-1)
Best – Cobras (N.Green, O.Totani, M.Staltari)
MetroStars (S.Grelli, J.Groves, I.Karlovic)

Seaford 1 (M.Sheriff)
Salisbury United 2 (A.Lindsay, M.Bekirovski) (HT 1-0)
Best – Seaford (F.Machochi, M.Sheriff, D.Frayne)
Salisbury (R.Deeley, S.Lindsay, S.Marron)

Adelaide City 9 (F.Agius 3, N.Orr, J.D'Arsie, D.Spagnuolo, J.Cummins, D.Paladino, A.Marveggio)
South Adelaide 1 (T.Foglia) (HT 3-0)
Best – Adel City (N.Orr, D.Paladino, F.Agius)
South Adel (N.Dawes, B.Coombs, T.Foglia)

Riverland 1 (S.Atkinson)
West Adelaide 8 (S.Kezios 3, H.Skoumbros 2, D.Reynolds 2, TOG) (HT 0-4)
Best – Riverland
(I.Altundag, T.Thiel, K.Collison) West Adel (D.Reynolds, P.Toumazos, D.Lambrinos)

Apollo 0
Modbury 4 (S.Pearce 3, R.Devlin)
(HT 0-0)
Best – Apollo (S.Wallis, B.Morris, T.Bytheway) Modbury (Not Provided)

Raiders 5 (R.Alagich 2, N.Kuzman, C.Goodwin, M.Muscroft) Noarlunga United 3 (M.Sefton, A.McArdle, B.Hibbs) (HT 2-3)
Best – Raiders (D.Barisic, R.Alagich, M.Muscroft)
Noarlunga (M.Sefton, S.Reed, F.Maclean)

Adelaide Hills 0
Adelaide Galaxy 1 (S.McGreevy)
(HT 0-0)
Best – Adel Hills(A.Kelly, L.Smith, N.Elliott)
Galaxy (C.Christopherson, M.Doyle, J.Wright)

Adelaide Olympic 0
Croydon 1 (Z.Malik) (HT 0-1)
Best – Olympic (A.Iandorio, D.Nicholls, T.Mullen)
Croydon (M.Papacharalambous, L.Klimek, R.Dingle)

Enfield City 10 (M.Cinco 5, T.Prescott 3, M.Graham, E.Hughes)
International 1 (A.Morris) (HT 5-0)
Best – Enfield (M.Cinco, T.Prescott, D.Martinez)
Inter (C.Cella, A.Craig, D.Bonner)

Campbelltown City 17 (M.Deegan 4, J.Trimboli 4, P.Barbaro 3, A.Bulabek 3, A.Toure, M.Paleka, S.Zilic)
Adelaide Simba Heroes 0
(HT 4-0)
Best – Campbelltown (M.Deegan, S.Zilic, D.Signoriello)
Heroes (L.Lomude, P.Mbuto, D.George)

NEXT ROUND

Round 6
Sat 08/05/2010
Adelaide Blue Eagles vs Cumberland Utd
3pm Marden Sports Complex
Adelaide Cobras vs MetroStars
3pm Weigall Oval
Western Strikers vs Adelaide City
3pm Carnegie Reserve
Adelaide Galaxy vs Raiders
7pm Con Makris Park
Para Hills vs Campbelltown
7pm The Paddocks

LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
MetroStars	4	3	1	0	13	5	8	10
Campbelltown City	4	3	0	1	7	7	0	9
Adelaide Galaxy	4	2	2	0	6	2	4	8
Adelaide City	4	2	1	1	6	7	-1	7
Adelaide Blue Eagles	4	2	0	2	11	8	3	6
Western Strikers	4	2	0	2	10	10	0	6
Adelaide Cobras	4	1	1	2	6	10	-4	4
Cumberland Utd	4	1	0	3	9	11	-2	3
Para Hills	4	0	2	2	4	9	-5	2
Raiders	4	0	1	3	4	7	-3	1

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Floreat's Late Winner Sinks Stirling

By Ashley Morrison

Three weeks ago Paul Lincoln took over as coach of Stirling Lions and celebrated with a win in his first game. But two defeats in the next two have put pressure back onto the role of coach of this club, as some supporters were far from happy about the defeat away at Floreat Athena.

Stirling started the better, however they frequently coughed up possession cheaply, and in the opening ten minutes mistakes gave Floreat two scoring opportunities. In the 12th minute it was third time lucky as Floreat made them pay.

Clayton Arnez gave the ball away for Stirling, Vatistas slipped the ball forward to Neiderberger, and his first time pass to Mikulic saw him beat the offside trap, and finish past an isolated Miller to give Floreat the lead.

The goal stung Stirling, and they started to gain ascendancy especially down the flanks through Boi and Lujan, but the final ball into the box from both players frequently undid the good work that preceded it.

In the 17th minute though they deserved to equalise. Lujan combined well with Dickson and then Lujan unleashed a powerful drive from the edge of the penalty box that left Dunn, in goal for Floreat, a mere spectator. Unfortunately for Stirling it smashed into the post and Floreat were able to clear.

Two minutes later it was Dunn that Floreat had to thank for keeping their lead in tact. Lujan did well down the left hand flank and crossed to the back post, the ball fell to Stares who controlled it before striking accurately for the bottom left hand corner. Dunn was down sharply and pushed the shot around the post.

Dunn was again the saviour in the 22nd minute when new signing Mario Marcinko beat the offside trap to run onto a ball from Dickson, he just had Dunn to beat, but the Floreat keeper was alert to the danger and came of his line quickly to smother the shot.

It was all Stirling at this point, and it was the experience of player coach Kovacevic and the goalkeeping of Dunn that was preventing Stirling from getting back on equal terms.

Boi curled an effort over the cross bar when a Kovacevic clearance came to him, and then Robinson delayed his shot too long, and Smith was across to cover and deflect it out for a corner.

Floreat's only clear chance came on the counter attack late in the first half when Isaia made a good run and crossed for Bachiller in space but Kevin Miller saved well.

Lujan had another chance to pull Stirling level soon after, he made a good run across the box, and shot, the ball struck Bachiller and ricocheted back to Lujan, but his second attempt sailed over the cross bar.

Inglewood striker Ryan Clarke and Swan United defender Robert Monterosso in action in the 0-0 draw at the 6PR StadiumPHOTO: PETER SIMCOX

There was no doubt that Stirling had been the better side in the first half, but playing with just Marcinko up front on his own never looked to be the answer. As tirelessly as he worked all afternoon he lacked support, with Lujan and Boi on the flanks being too far away from him, and no midfielder coming through to support when he held the ball up.

It was a clever header by Marcinko that played Boi in the 50th minute, he slipped the ball to substitute Frost, but he wasted the opportunity hitting his shot straight at Dunn.

As Stirling sought an equaliser Floreat began to come more into the game, their task helped after Robinson was substituted, as suddenly they had far more freedom in midfield. Good openings were created for Mikulic and Isaia, but Stirling stood firm at the back.

In the 72nd minute Stirling upset Floreat by playing on when Floreat's Barrera was lying injured on the ground, but as ruthless as this action may have seemed, their play lacked the same mercilessness. Minutes later Frost had a great opportunity, but he delayed shooting and Pavlovic stepped in to clear.

The best move of the game came in the 83rd minute when Migas surged forward for Floreat from midfield, he passed to Mirco whose first time return pass found Migas again, his first time ball on the run was played into the path of Mikulic, but the ball bobbled at the vital second as he looked to shoot and Stirling cleared.

Two minutes later Stirling did equalise, albeit it fortuitously. The ball was played to substitute de Abreu on the right and on the run he looked to whip the ball into the box as quickly as he could, without any obvious attempt to pick out a man. The ball looped towards the goal, went well over the head of Dunn, struck the back post and ended up rolling across the line on the far side of the goal. As happy as de Abreu was about the goal, he looked as surprised as everyone else in the ground that he had scored, as it did not appear that this was his intention.

Stirling obviously felt that they had done enough and deserved a share of the spoils, but Floreat showed why they are one of the top sides in the competition, as when they needed to find that something extra, they were able to do so.

In the last minute a good run, by Smith earned Floreat a corner. The ball was whipped in and only partially cleared by Stirling, back to Smith. He moved away from the Stirling goal and then curled a wonderful ball back into the box with his left foot, Mikulic rose above the static Stirling defence and headed down to Miller's right, leaving the 'keeper no chance.

To compound Paul Lincoln's bad day, import Jason Gavin was shown a second yellow card for what can only be classed as callous tackle on Migas born out of frustration.

In other games former Stirling Lions player Jordan Rhodes made the perfect start for Mandurah City scoring in the 9th minute, but Perth came back through goals from Olivera and De Felice to win 2-1. The Western Knights maintained their position at the top of the table, with a 2-0 win away at Balcatta.

Once again Joondalup was the place to be if you wanted goals, as they played out a 3-3 draw with Armadale. Joondalup started the scoring and then fell 2-1 behind, pulled it back to 2-2 before going down again and equalising in the 77th minute thanks to Watt.

Sorrento and Cockburn, and Inglewood and Swan played out 0-0 draws. Which means Inglewood remain bottom with Mandurah on just 4 points.

WA LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Western Knights	6	5	1	0	20	9	11	16
2 Perth SC	6	5	0	1	17	12	5	15
3 Floreat Athena	6	4	0	2	17	8	9	12
4 Balcatta	6	3	1	2	11	11	0	10
5 Armadale	6	2	3	1	11	7	4	9
6 Sorrento	6	2	2	2	9	11	-2	8
7 Stirling Lions	6	2	1	3	6	8	-2	7
8 Cockburn City	6	1	2	3	5	6	-1	5
9 ECU Joondalup	6	1	2	3	13	16	-3	5
10 Swan United	6	1	2	3	5	10	-5	5
11 Mandurah City	6	1	1	4	8	15	-7	4
12 Inglewood United	6	1	1	4	7	14	-7	4

WA RESULTS

PREMIER DIVISION
First Team
Floreat Athena 2 (Mikulic 12, 90) Stirling Lions 1 (De Abreu 83); ECU Joondalup 3 (Bushby 4, O'Callaghan 52, Watt 77) Armadale 3 (Ramirez 13, J Robinson 39, Ord 62); Sorrento 0 Cockburn City 0; Inglewood United 0 Swan United 0; Balcatta 0 Western Knights 2 (Campbell 50, David Micevski 90+2); Mandurah City 1 (Rhodes 9) Perth SC 2 (Oliveira 29, De Felice 73)

Reserves
Floreat Athena 1 Stirling Lions 5; ECU Joondalup 0 Armadale 2; Sorrento 1 Cockburn City 3; Inglewood United 1 Swan United 2; Balcatta 1 Western Knights 2; Mandurah City 2 Perth SC 2

Under 18's
Floreat Athena 3 Stirling Lions 1; ECU Joondalup 4 Armadale 3; Sorrento 1 Cockburn City 6; Inglewood United 2 Swan United 2; Balcatta 0 Western Knights 2; Mandurah City 2 Perth SC 3

DIVISION ONE
First Team
Bayswater City 3 (Tumoe 4, Marulanda 74P, Gooding 90) Gosnells City 1 (Chaiz 56); Fremantle Spirit 2 (Lovie 45, Shaw 90) Ashfield 2 (Greenwood 65P, McIlroy 80); Morley-Windmills 1(Nelson 74) Wanneroo City 1 (Cairney 44P); Forrestfield United 5 (Burns 68, 79, 90, Barnes 77, Hart 87) Canning City 2 (Garcia 6, Sheehaw 14); Bunbury Forum Force 6 (Kavanagh 1, Stewart 53, Rodgers 72P, 88, Quinn 76, Chappell 82) Queens Park 0; Rockingham City 0 Dianella White Eagles 6 (Steamer 39, Ryder 46, 90+2, Davies 50, Helen 80, 90+1)

Reserves
Bayswater City 2 Gosnells City 2; Fremantle Spirit 3 Ashfield 4; Morley-Windmills 0 Wanneroo City 4; Forrestfield United 1 Canning City 3; Bunbury Forum Force 4 Queens Park 0; Rockingham City 3 Dianella White Eagles 6

Under 18's
Bayswater City 3 Gosnells City 0; Fremantle Spirit 3 Ashfield 0; Morley-Windmills 2 Wanneroo City 7; Forrestfield United 4 Canning City 3; Bunbury Forum Force 12 Queens Park 1; Rockingham City 1 Dianella White Eagles 3

NEXT ROUND

Round 7
Sat 1 May 3PM Armadale v Inglewood United
Alfred Skeet Oval
Sat 1 May 3PM Sorrento v Balcatta
Percy Doyle Reserve
Sat 1 May 3PM Stirling Lions v ECU Joondalup *Macedonia Park*
Sat 1 May 3PM Swan United v Mandurah City
Swan Italian Club
Sat 1 May 3PM Perth SC v Western Knights
BGC Stadium - Dorrien Gardens
Sat 1 May 3PM Cockburn City v Floreat Athena *Dalmatinac Park*

Dingle inspires Balcatta to title

Balcatta has won the Smarter than Smoking Women's Night Series Final after a pulsating 4-3 win over Northern Redbacks in the final minutes.

A crowd of over 130 people made their way to Coker Park to watch the best in women's football go at it in the pre-season decider.

Dingle was the star of the match, with the striker completing her hat-trick in the 89th minute to seal Balcatta's fate as the Night Series winners.

Northern Redbacks began the better of the two sides after Lara Filocamo opened the scoring on 21 minutes.

Dingle equalised for Balcatta soon after, in a very even contest between the northern rivals.

The crowd expected a tight clash following the 2-2 draw in the group stage of the pre-season competition and the match surpassed expectations with seven goals in the end.

Balcatta enjoy their Smarter than Smoking Night Series Final win

Filicamo then unleashed an unstoppable rocket from all of 30-yards to inspire her side back into the lead before the half time interval.

Balcatta's Clapham didn't waste much time bringing her side level just seven minutes into the second half with an outside of the foot effort which curled into the top corner past Redbacks 'keeper Jobling.

Only moments later Dingle bagged her second of the match to make it 3-2 as the goals continued to flow.

With half an hour to go in the decider, the Redbacks' Carroll positioned herself well at the back post for a straightforward tap-in to draw the scores level again.

As the match seemed destined for a penalty shootout, Dingle stole the match for Balcatta with a long drive for her third goal in the Night Series Final.

The Smarter than Smoking Women's Premier League kicked off this Anzac Day long weekend.

DIVISION ONE LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Bunbury Forum Force`	4	4	0	0	17	2	15	12
2 Dianella White Eagles`	4	3	1	0	13	5	8	10
3 Bayswater City	4	3	0	1	14	5	9	9
4 Gosnells City	4	3	0	1	10	5	5	9
5 Forrestfield United	4	2	0	2	10	10	0	6
6 Ashfield	4	1	1	2	10	11	-1	4
7 Wanneroo City	4	1	1	2	5	7	-2	4
8 Canning City	4	1	1	2	4	10	-6	4
9 Fremantle Spirit	4	0	3	1	6	9	-3	3
10 Rockingham City	4	1	0	3	4	11	-7	3
11 Queens Park	4	1	0	3	6	16	-10	3
12 Morley-Windmills	4	0	1	3	3	11	-8	1

Head to head battles await in ACT

By Russ Gibbs

Gatorade Premier League action took a hiatus on the weekend, but actions returns this week with high-flying Monaro Panthers and Champions Canberra FC looking to extend their 100% records whilst at the other end of the table Tuggeranong United and Woden Valley go head-to-head in a battle to claim their first points of the season.

Friday 30th April 2010
Monaro Panthers v Canberra City (Hawker Football Centre), kick off 20:00

Surprise packets Monaro Panthers kick off the third round of Gatorade Premier League action when they face Canberra City in a home match at Hawker Football Centre. The Panthers have, perhaps surprisingly given their pre-season Federation Cup form, won both their opening fixtures in the 2010 Premier League to leave the Queanbeyan-based club riding high near the top of the table. Indeed, had it not been for the form of goal-hungry Canberra FC, Monaro would be leading the way, only trailing the champions on goal difference. With six points under their belts the pressure is now on to continue that run with a tricky looking fixture against a competitive City outfit that can consider itself unfortunate not to have gained some sort of tangible reward from their trip to Deakin Stadium. City know this ground well, using it for their home matches in this season's GPL and that factor may play into their hands in what promises to be an excellent match. The Panthers' encouraging 5-1 win over Tuggeranong a fortnight ago saw prolific striker Goran Veljanovski off the mark for the season and if the Panthers can supply the eagle-eyed hit man with enough opportunities they will be confident of gaining a tangible reward from this fixture.

Saturday 1st May 2010
Belconnen United v Cooma Tigers (McKellar Park), kick off 18:00

The sole match on Saturday afternoon sees Cooma Tigers making the trek north to challenge Belconnen United at McKellar Park. Despite gaining four points so far this year, the Blue Devils haven't yet found top gear and will be aiming to do so against the dangerous Tigers. Cooma recorded their first win back in the top flight last time out (2-0 against ANU FC) and will be gunning for their big-name opposition. With the Blue Devils possessing striking talents such as Tai Smith, Danny Macor and David Leet, scoring goals shouldn't be an issue for Scott Conlon's men and yet there is some doubt as to whether all three can be accommodated in the same line-up. This has seen Leet take a turn on the bench last week and whether conundrum can be solved to the mutual benefit of all parties will be an interesting side note to Belconnen's season. The creativity of Dustin Wells and Taylor Beaton will be required to break down a stubborn Cooma defence whereas going forward the Tigers may fancy their chances. With the mercurial Marcial Munoz feeding the likes of Daniel Gecic and, possibly, Goran Josifovski, the visitors should not struggle for goal scoring opportunities. Belconnen will be slightly favoured to take the points but don't be surprised if the Tigers make them work hard for the honours.

ANU FC striker Elyja Shah executes a bicycle kick.
PHOTOS: PAUL LAU

Tuggeranong United young striker Alex Weber. skips over a Monaro challlenge.
PHOTO: PAUL LAU

Sunday 2nd May 2010Woden Valley v Tuggeranong United (Woden Park), kick off 15:00

This is a match of huge importance at Woden Park. Both the hosts, Woden Valley, and their visitors, Tuggeranong United, are winless after the first two rounds of football and are champing at the bit to get off the mark. Defensive frailties in both teams have been brutally exposed to date with a combined total of 25 goals against (Woden 9, TUFC 16) hardly the ideal start to the year. Expect plenty more goals in this one as well as both team's will go for the jugular sensing that this could be the match that kick starts their faltering seasons. The teams seem fairly equal in terms of personnel and a 3-3 draw in pre-season, the last time these two faced each other, augments that fact. Since that draw Woden has been able to call on the skills of Carlos Salazar, recruited from the USA, and the attacking midfielder has settled into life well under the tutelage of Pat McCann. The fact that McCann is a former Tuggeranong United player, indeed it was McCann who struck the Tuggeranong goal in their 1-4 Premier Pathway League defeat by Canberra FC last season, gives this match an added edge with the Woden Coach sure to be the target of some good-natured ribbing throughout the contest. It's a critical game for McCann and his United counterpart Darren Viskovich, The winner can look forward with renewed confidence while for the vanquished a long slog could be on the cards.

Canberra FC v ANU FC (Deakin Stadium), kick off 15:00

Canberra FC will be confident of making it three wins from three when they play ANU FC at home on Sunday evening. However, the champions are all too well aware of the threat posed by the students as it was ANU FC that came within thirty seconds of defeating Canberra FC in the federation Cup semi-finals. Will Canberra FC make the same mistake twice? ANU FC were in rampant form for most of the semi-final clash between the pair and, but for the brilliance of Ben Klug in the Canberra FC goal, may well have built a lead from which there would have been no recovery. However, Canberra FC being Canberra FC they snatched an improbable equaliser from the jaws of defeat before running over the top of the underdogs who had withdrawn leading strikers Daniel Sparrow and Tom Rogic prior to the match leveler. Since then John Mitchell's ANU FC have lost both their opening league fixtures, to Canberra City and Cooma Tigers, and a visit to the champions is probably not the game at the top of their most wanted list right now. By contrast Canberra FC has started the season very brightly. Fifteen goals from pummeling Tuggeranong United 11-1 and Canberra City 4-1 see the title holders in good heart. They should have learned from their mistakes in the cup semi-final and will be out to make certain lightning doesn't strike twice.

Canberra Olympic v Goulburn Strikers (Hawker Football Centre), kick off 17:00

Canberra Olympic faces Goulburn Strikers at Hawker Football Centre in what looks to be an intriguing proposition. Whilst Olympics' defensive woes seems to have settled, with Belconnen unable to breakthrough last time out, they face another serious test in this one as they look to contain the threat of Strikers' ace striker Brody Willis, the alert Daniel Aliffi and flyer Sam Taylor. With plenty of attacking thrust of their own it would be a major surprise should this fixture go the same way as Olympics' last outing, a 0-0 stalemate. After making the Federation Cup Final the Strikers were brought back down to earth with a resounding thump in losing their opening GPL fixture to Monaro Panthers. That 1-0 loss was a wake-up call for Carlo Aliffi's troops and they responded in some fashion the following week thrashing a below-par Woden Valley 6-0. If they can utilise the speed of Sam Taylor and Willis to its best effect then Goulburn could cause a number of problems for Olympic's defensive line which is susceptible to pace. Olympic should shuffle the pack again to accommodate the return of Andrew Ross with the classy playmaker likely to force his way back into central midfield. With Ross pulling the strings for the exciting attack that includes Yianni Karabalis and Dominic Giampaolo goals should be a given in this one.

NEXT ROUND

Round 3
Fri 30 Apr KO 8pm Monaro Panthers v Canberra City
Hawker Football Centre

Sat 1 May KO 6pm Belconnen Utd v Cooma Tigers
McKellar Park
Sun 2 May KO 3pm Woden Valley v Tuggeranong Utd
Woden Park Enclosed

Sun 2 May KO 3pm Canberra FC v ANU FC
Deakin Stadium (Deakin Oval)

Sun 2 May KO 5pm Canberra Olympic v Goulburn Strikers
Hawker Football Centre

LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Canberra FC	2	2	0	0	15	2	+13	6
2 Monaro Panthers	2	2	0	0	7	2	+5	6
3 Belconnen United	2	1	1	0	3	2	+1	4
4 Canberra Olympic	2	1	1	0	3	2	+1	4
5 Goulburn Strikers	2	1	0	1	7	2	+5	3
6 Cooma Tigers	2	1	0	1	4	3	+1	3
7 Canberra City	2	1	0	1	3	5	-2	3
8 ANU FC	2	0	0	2	1	3	-2	0
9 Woden Valley	2	0	0	2	2	9	-7	0
10 Tuggeranong Utd	2	0	0	2	2	16	-14	0

WPL LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Belwest Foxes	2	2	0	0	13	1	+12	6
2 Woden Valley	2	2	0	0	11	0	+11	6
3 Weston Creek	2	1	1	0	3	0	+3	4
4 Canberra FC	2	1	0	1	4	12	-8	3
5 Belconnen United	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	2
6 Tuggeranong United	2	0	1	1	1	3	-2	1
7 ANU WFC	2	0	0	2	0	6	-6	0
8 Brindabella Blues	2	0	0	2	1	11	-10	0

Three-way tussle at top of WPL

By Niki Cook

Three teams remain unbeaten in the Victorian Women's Premier League, after Round 3 was played out over the weekend. Box Hill Inter returned to the top of the ladder where it is joined by Sandringham, with the other undefeated team, Casey Comets, a point further back in fourth, but with a game in hand. Sandwiched in between is Heidelberg United, which suffered its first loss of the campaign. Bendigo won its first match of the season, while Altona City and South Melbourne both lost once again.

Box Hill Inter returned to winning ways and propelled itself back to the top of the WPL ladder with a two goal victory over Ashburton on Friday night at Wembley Park. Playing its first home match of the season, Inter suggested that Wembley will continue to offer little welcome to visiting sides, as it chalked up its second victory of the year. Louia Bisby scored both goals for the home side, continuing Inter's recent dominance over Ashburton, which has not taken a point from the reigning premier since Round 14 2007. Ashburton now has one win and one loss for the season to date, and it sits sixth on the ladder.

Mixed emotions at Tom Flood Reserve on Sunday, as Bendigo Vipers picked up its first win of the season, but in the process compounded South Melbourne's miserable start to the campaign, with a narrow 1-0 victory. In an arm wrestle of a match, in which neither goalkeeper was really called into action, a Sarah Richardson free kick late in the first half was the difference between the two sides. For Bendigo, the win builds on its surprise draw with Box Hill last weekend, and sets up the regional team's season nicely, as it ends the round fifth on the ladder. With three rounds played, South has yet to even trouble the scoreboard, and it remains rooted to the foot of the ladder.

Sandringham was held to a 2-2 draw by Preston Lions on Monday night, giving Preston its first point of the season. It bounced back rapidly from that somewhat surprising result to post an upset of its own, defeating Heidelberg United 2-1 at Olympic Village. With the first half ending goalless, the action heated up after the interval, with the visiting side emerging on top. Emma Runnalls and Eliza Gleadell were on target for Sandringham, with Meghan Archer scoring for the home side. Sandringham ends the round with a share of top spot with seven points, while Heidelberg slips to third on the ladder.

Casey Comets holds the only remaining perfect record in the WPL, having won both of its matches to date. The second of these victories came on Sunday afternoon at Comets Stadium, with a 2-0 triumph over Altona City. A goal in each half proved enough for the home side, with Caroline McEvoy and Melissa Atherton both on target. The win lifts the Comets to fourth on the ladder, but with a game in hand over the three sides ahead of it. Altona is in a similar situation to South Melbourne, having lost all three of its matches so far, and it remains eighth on the ladder.

Round 4 begins at HC Kim Reserve on Sunday afternoon, with Altona City facing another tough encounter when it hosts Box Hill Inter, while Preston Lions returns from a week off and travels to McIvor Reserve to take on South Melbourne. Ashburton welcomes Bendigo Vipers to Ashburton Park, while on Monday night Sandringham meets Casey Comets in a top four clash.

Ouch! ... Heidelberg keeper Katie Neville is mowed down by her tumbling captain, Rita Mankowska who is rebounding off Emma Runnalls (Sandringham) PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

Hannah Whittaker (Sandringham) denies Melanie Camilleri (Heidelberg) a shot at goal. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

WPL RESULTS

Box Hill Inter 2 (L Bisby 2)
Ashburton 0

Bendigo Vipers 1
(S Richardson)
South Melbourne Womens 0

Heidelberg Utd 1 (M Archer)
Sandringham 2
(E Gleadell E Runnalls)

Casey Comets 2
(C McEvoy MJ Atherton)
Altona City 0

Reserves: Box Hill Inter 1 Ashburton 2, BASL 1 South Melbourne 3, Heidelberg Utd 3 Sandringham 2, Casey Comets 3 Altona City 1

WPL NEXT ROUND

Bye v Heidelberg Utd

Altona City v Box Hill Inter
HC Kim Reserve Sun 2 May KO 1:00PM

South Melbourne v Preston Lions
McIvor Reserve Sun 2 May KO 1:00PM

Ashburton v Bendigo Vipers
Ashburton Park Sun 2 May KO 3:00PM

Sandringham v Casey Comets
Kingston Heath Soccer Complex
Mon 3 May KO 8:30PM

WPL LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Box Hill Inter	3	2	1	0	6	0	7
Sandringham	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Heidelberg Utd	3	2	0	1	7	2	6
Casey Comets	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Bendigo Vipers	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
Ashburton	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Preston Lions	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Altona City	3	0	0	3	2	8	0
South Melbourne	3	0	0	3	0	9	0

WPL RESERVES

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Heidelberg Utd	3	2	1	0	7	4	7
Ashburton	2	2	0	0	9	1	6
Casey Comets	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Sandringham	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
South Melbourne	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Box Hill Inter	3	1	0	2	5	4	3
BASL	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
Preston Lions	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
Altona City	3	0	0	3	2	13	0

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Top spot a simple equation for Reds

Adelaide United FC has its Round of 16 fate in its own hands heading into the final Match Day of the AFC Champions League 2010 Group Stage.

Equal on points with the Pohang Steelers but on top of Group H courtesy of a one goal superior goal difference with one match day to go, first place and a home game in the Round of 16 is there for the Reds' taking when they host China's Shandong Luneng at Hindmarsh Stadium on Tuesday night.

If United can repeat its Match Day 2 defeat of the Chinese Super League club with another three points at Hindmarsh, the 2008 ACL finalists will cement top spot regardless of Pohang's result against Sanfrecce Hiroshima in the other Group H match.

AFC regulations state that if two teams finish on the same points at the end of the Group Stage, top spot will be determined firstly by the teams' head to head record in their two Group Stage matches. With United recording a 1-nil win and a draw in their two matches against Pohang, the Reds would finish top if both sides finished on the same points.

To put it simply, United needs a similar or better result as the Steelers in order to have a home game in the one off knock-out Round of 16, where they would take on the runner-up of Group F, either Japan's Kashima Antlers or Korea's Jeonbuk Motors (Group F standings to be decided on April 28).

While a spot in the Round of 16 is already secure, there is no shortage of incentives for United to finish top. A slip up against Shandong and a second placed finish in the group would see the Reds travel out to Kashima or face a gruelling trip to the remote Korean city of Jeonju to face Jeonbuk Motors.

"We'd prefer that we'd play the (Round of 16) game at home," Coach Aurelio Vidmar said.

"It's an added advantage playing at home and the big disadvantage going to Jeonbuk is a flight to Seoul and then going 300km on a bus because there are no flights out there, so that's probably a good motivation for us to make sure we win this game on Tuesday."

Kick-Off for both Group H matches is at 7.30pm (ACST) but the Reds will be hoping not to have to depend on the score in Hiroshima to decide their Round of 16 destiny.

Tickets for the match against Shandong are available through Ticketek (call 132 849, online at www.ticketek.com.au).

Should Adelaide United finish top of Group H and play at home in the Round of 16 knockout match, tickets for that game to be played on Wednesday May 12 will go on sale to Adelaide United members from 9am Wednesday April 28, before going on sale to the general public at 9am Friday, April 30.

Adelaide United hope to keep its Asian adventure brewing when it entertains China's Seongnam tomorrow night at Hindmarsh Stadium. PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER

ACL Match Day 6

Adelaide United FC v Shandong Luneng (China)
Tuesday 27 April 7.30pm (ACST)
Hindmarsh Stadium

Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma (Korea Republic) v Melbourne Victory
Wed April 28 8.00pm (AEST)
Seongnam Stadium

Both matches are broadcast on Fox Sports.

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	Pts
SEONGNAM (KOR)	5	4	0	1	8	4	4	12
BEIJING GUOAN (CHN)	5	2	1	2	5	5	0	7
KAWASAKI (JPN)	5	2	0	3	8	6	2	6
MELB VICTORY (AUS)	5	1	1	3	1	7	-6	4

Group H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	Pts
ADELAIDE UTD (AUS)	5	3	1	1	6	3	3	10
POHANG (KOR)	5	3	1	1	5	3	2	10
SANFRECCE (JPN)	5	2	0	3	7	8	-1	6
SHANDONG (CHN)	5	1	0	4	4	8	-4	3

Moment of truth arrives in European ties

By Matt Galea

It all comes to a head in the Champions League next week. Four sides will compete in their respective second legs in the hope of booking a date in Madrid for a chance to win the coveted Champions League trophy. The two ties could still go either way, in what should ensure two fantastic games of football which, whatever the result, will surely set up a very interesting prospect for the 22nd of May in the Santiago Bernabeu.

Lyon vs. Bayern Munich – Municipal De Gerland
Thursday 29th April
KO 4.30am (AEST)

After enjoying a hard fought win at the Allianz Arena, Bayern Munich will head to France knowing that one away goal may well be all that is necessary to kill this tie. Lyon will certainly be unhappy that they didn't score an away goal, and it could very well prove the difference between the two sides.

The Bavarian giants will be without star Frank Ribery, who was sent off at the Allianz Arena. The French stars private life has come under public scrutiny after details of a prostitution scandal have become known to the public. Despite their French wingers off the field problems, Munich remains in a good position in the Bundesliga. They are still top of the table with three games left, and with a fixture list that should represent plain sailing, Munich will be confident of reclaiming the Bundesliga title, which has alluded them in recent times. Their form in the Champions League has simultaneously seen Bayern stamping their authority in Europe again, lead admirably by manager Louis Van Gaal after several seasons of underachievement.

Lyon too will be delighted with their appearance in the semi finals of European's premier competition. They are by no means out of this tie, but will have to be especially careful in defense. Should Bayern score first, Lyon will certainly have a mountain to climb, however a strong opening from Lyon could completely change the dynamics of the tie. The loss of Toulalan will certainly hurt Lyon, however alone, it shouldn't break Lyon. Claude Puel will be insisting on a good performance in the hopes of seeing Lyon make their first appearance in a Champions League final. Whatever the result, Lyon will be extremely pleased with their performances in the tournament which has seen them knock out sides such as Liverpool, Bordeaux and most impressively, Real Madrid.

FC Barcelona vs. Inter Milan
Camp Nou
Wednesday April 28
KO 4.30am (AEST)

Inter Milan certainly made a big statement last week when they defeated the current Champions League holders Barcelona by three goals to one. Often seen as continental pretenders, their very impressive performance against Barca has forced Europe to take notice of Internazionale. Although Milito appeared to be offside when he scored Inter's third, and Barcelona were very unlucky not to be given a penalty, it is hard to say that Inter Milan don't thoroughly deserve their advantage. Mourinho used every ounce of his experience against the comparatively inexperienced Pep Guardiola to steer his side to a fantastic result and a terrific chance to book a first Champions League final appearance since 1972.

One would be foolish to completely count out Barcelona, but having watched them capitulate to the fine defending and lethal counter attack of Jose's Inter, the two goal advantage Inter enjoy may eventually prove too much. Pep Guardiola will look to a big improvement from Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who failed to shine in the relative absence of Lionel Messi, who was terrifically marked by both Zannetti and Cambiasso. Guardiola will be tasked with the tricky job of finding a way to break down a very stubborn and capable Inter defense, whilst being careful not to concede an away goal.

Inter on the other hand will be more than happy to see Barcelona come at them. They proved to be very dangerous on the counter attack and will look to do the same in the Nou Camp. Any away goal will surely be more than enough to finish Barcelona's attempts to make it two Champions League titles in as many years. Mourinho, never short of confidence, would be delighted to end his Barcelona hoodoo if he were to pull off a fantastic triumph, and would look to further enhance his reputation by bringing the Champions League trophy back to the blue half of Milan.

Can Messi and Co. overturn a two goal deficit against an in form Inter Milan side and stay on course to defend their European Champions League crown?

All will be revealed in the early hours of this week, Australian time.

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FFV Men's Metropolitan League & Women's Results

MENS METROPLOITAN LEAGUE NORTH-WEST: Oak Park 3 (M Erdal) Ascot Vale 3 (E Gonzalez), Northern Utd 1 Yarra Jets 2, Tullamarine Jets 4 (F Arik I Aygun A Koruklu M Al Kazimi) Light Utd 3 (M Durmaz SA Cicek Own Goal), Moreland Wolves 0 Heidelberg Stars 2 (M Hassan H Hassan), Altona North 6 (J Bondin 3 D Byrnes) Keon Park 1, Reserves: Oak Park 5 Ascot Vale 0, Northern Utd 4 Yarra Jets 0, Tullamarine Jets 2 (J Cheong KA Keane) Light Utd 5, Moreland Wolves 2 Heidelberg Stars 3, Altona North 3 Keon Park 0

MENS METROPOLITAN LEAGUE SOUTH-EAST: Endeavour Hills 1 Middle Park FC 4 (M Roberts 3 J Alston), Harrisfield Hurricanes 2 (A Pavlidis) Caulfield Grammarians 2 (M Bagan), Parkmore 1 Dandenong Warriors 2 (LL Friquin J Yong Yan Yin), Old Mentonians 4 Ringwood City 1 (J Van Gulik), Reserves: Endeavour Hills 0 Middle Park FC 2, Harrisfield Hurricanes 3 Caulfield Grammarians 1, Parkmore 1 Dandenong Warriors 1,

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE DIV 1: Doncaster Rovers 6 (E Kyrgios A Amore 4) South Yarra 1, Whitehorse Utd 0 Ballarat & District 3, Bayswater Strikers 1 (AE Mckillen) Uni. of Melbourne 4 (E Fenwick 3 G Karaiskos), Monbulk 1 South Springvale 0, Bundoora Utd 8 (D Petreska M Zilic 2 S Oddo N Nicolaou K Smith) Brighton 0, Reserves: Doncaster Rovers 12 South Yarra 0, Whitehorse Utd 2 Ballarat Lady Devils 1, Bayswater Strikers 0 Uni. of Melbourne 6, Monbulk 1 South Springvale 3, Bundoora Utd 6 Brighton 1

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE DIV 2 NORTH-WEST: Western Suburbs 3 (J Padic K Pantelidis EL Noulas) Melbourne Bears 0, North Geelong Warriors 2 (NS Milinkovic D Marincic) Cairnlea 4 (K Theodorou K Cirav D Mutluel 2), Western Eagles 4 (C Sliwinski 2 AM Felsztynski) Whittlesea Ranges 2, Darebin Falcons 2 La Trobe University 3 (NE Garner),

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE DIV 2 SOUTH-EAST: Ashburton 0 Albert Park 4 (AF Tardif H Saur S Dillon T Kiddle), Mooroolbark 1 North Caulfield 1, Berwick City 1 (K Wilson) Noble Park 2 (S Davies A Partila), Southern Suburbs 3 (K Finlay T Moutafis 2) Mornington 1 (A Schuchardt), Sandringham 0 Monash University 0

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE DIV 3 NORTH-WEST: Maribyrnong Utd 0 Eltham Redbacks 5 (KM Hodgson 2 M Parker H Lirosi), Melton 1 (T Abela) Keilor Park 7 (M Emond 2 H Hogarth 3 KH Nguyen), Yarra Jets 4 (E Garner H Conway a callaghan 2) Diamond Valley Utd 1 (S Gooney), Old Carey 1 Sunshine Georgies 4, Brunswick Zebras 2 (L Johnston Y Mojica-Perez) Kyneton District 1 (SM Hooppell)

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE DIV 3 SOUTH-EAST: Ashburton 1 South Melbourne 2, Endeavour Utd 5 (K Fernandes L Mousaco 2 ML Elder) East Bentleigh 0, Langwarrin 8 Beaumaris 1, Croydon City Arrows 2 Knox City 1, Box Hill Inter 1 Seaford Utd 2

WOMENS METROPOLITAN LEAGUE NORTH-WEST: Fitzroy City 0 Melbourne Knights 0, Plenty Valley Lions 6 Yarra Jets 3, Brunswick Zebras 3 (E Cameron EK Johns R Wheen) Mitchell Rangers 1, Watsonia Heights 1 (GR Cerone) Brunswick City 11, Tullamarine Jets 4 (M Upward 2 D Kocaoglu N Aksoy) Northern Roosters 0

WOMENS METROPOLITAN LEAGUE SOUTH-EAST: Berwick City 2 Endeavour Hills 0, Croydon City Arrows 2 Dandenong City 3, Sandringham 1 Skye Utd 1,

WOMENS METROPLOITAN LEAGUE CENTRAL: Sandringham 1 Albert Park 2, Elwood City 2 Bayside Argonauts 4, Sydenham Park 5 Swinburne University WSC 0, Uni. of Melbourne 0 Monash University 2

MENS THIRDS LEAGUE DIV 1: Monash University 0 South Yarra 6, Southern Suburbs 1 Juventus Old Boys 3, Doveton 1 Altona Lions 3,

MENS THIRDS LEAGUE DIV 2 NORTH-WEST: Brunswick City 3 Essendon Utd 0, Moreland City 4 Keilor Park 2, La Trobe University 3 Upfield 0

MENS THIRDS LEAGUE DIV 2 SOUTH-EAST: Old Camberwell Grammar 1 South Yarra 3, Berwick City 2 Bayside Argonauts 1, Caulfield Grammarians 3 Boroondara Eagles 2, Old Scotch 2 Old Melburnians 4

MENS THIRDS LEAGUE DIV 3 NORTH-WEST: Lalor 3 Northcote City 6, Plenty Valley Lions 2 La Trobe University 1, Uni. of Melbourne 2 Werribee City 2, Hoppers Crossing 1 Kyneton District 1 (J Davey)

MENS THIRDS LEAGUE DIV 3 SOUTH-EAST: Riversdale 4 Old Melburnians 3, Melbourne University 1 RMIT Redbacks 11, Monash University 2 (B De Ridder) Brandon Park 2

MENS THIRDS LEAGUE DIV 4 NORTH-WEST: Eltham Redback FC 3 Kyneton District 7 (D Bennett C Field D Herrera 3 S Kennedy J Davey), Brimbank Stallions 4 Williamstown 1, Uni. of Melbourne 3 Cairnlea 5, Watsonia Heights 0 Altona City 7,

MENS THIRDS LEAGUE DIV 4 SOUTH-EAST: Monash University 0 South Yarra 4, Old Scotch 1 Beaumaris 3, Marcellin Eagles 3 RMIT Redbacks 0,

MENS THIRDS LEAGUE DIV 5 NORTH-WEST: Heidelberg Utd 1 Melbourne Bears 5, Mitchell Rangers 0 Kyneton District 1 (SC Dingle), Altona City 4 North Sunshine Eagles 1, Uni. of Melbourne 4 Moreland Wolves 9

MENS THIRDS LEAGUE DIV 5 SOUTH-EAST: Frankston Pines 6 RMIT Redbacks 0,

MENS THIRDS LEAGUE DIVISION 6: Old Scotch 0 Beaumaris 4, Sandringham City 1 8 Sandringham City 2 3,

MENS MASTERS NORTH-WEST: Whittlesea Zebras 1 Avondale Heights 1, Moreland City 1 Fitzroy City 2,

MENS MASTERS SOUTH-EAST: Southern Suburbs 1 White Star Dandenong 1,

MENS MASTERS CENTRAL: Juventus Old Boys 4 Middle Park FC 2, Eastern Lions 4 Ashburton 2, Beaumaris 1 South Yarra 2, Brighton 10 Caulfield Cobras 2

Mens Metropolitan League North-West

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Tullamarine Jets	3	2	1	0	8	4	7
Heidelberg Stars	3	2	1	0	6	3	7
Moreland Wolves	3	2	0	1	9	3	6
Altona North	3	1	2	0	11	6	5
Northern Utd	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
Yarra Jets	3	1	1	1	4	7	4
Oak Park	3	0	3	0	6	6	3
Light Utd	3	1	0	2	6	7	3
Ascot Vale	3	0	1	2	3	7	1
Keon Park	3	0	0	3	2	14	0

Mens Metropolitan League North-West Reserves

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Northern Utd	3	3	0	0	9	1	9
Light Utd	3	2	1	0	12	7	7
Altona North	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Heidelberg Stars	3	1	2	0	8	7	5
Tullamarine Jets	3	1	1	1	9	8	4
Oak Park	3	1	0	2	6	3	3
Moreland Wolves	3	1	0	2	8	7	3
Yarra Jets	2	1	0	1	4	5	3
Ascot Vale	3	0	0	3	2	12	0
Keon Park	3	0	0	3	1	13	0

Mens Metropolitan League South-East

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Dandenong Warriors	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Caulfield Grammarians	3	1	2	0	7	5	5
Middle Park FC	2	1	1	0	6	3	4
Old Mentonians	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Ringwood City	3	1	1	1	4	6	4
St Kevins	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
Harrisfield Hurricanes	2	0	2	0	3	3	2
Parkmore	2	0	0	2	2	4	0
Endeavour Hills	3	0	0	3	2	8	0

Mens Metropolitan League South-East Reserves

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Dandenong Warriors	3	2	1	0	10	4	7
Middle Park FC	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Ringwood City	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
St Kevins	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Harrisfield Hurricanes	2	1	0	1	5	4	3
Parkmore	2	0	2	0	3	3	2
Old Mentonians	1	0	0	1	3	5	0
Caulfield Grammarians	3	0	0	3	1	9	0
Endeavour Hills	3	0	0	3	0	9	0

Womens State League Div 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Bundoora Utd	2	2	0	0	14	0	6
Doncaster Rovers	2	2	0	0	11	1	6
Ballarat & District	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Monbulk	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
South Springvale	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Uni. of Melbourne	2	1	0	1	4	6	3
Bayswater Strikers	2	0	0	2	1	6	0
Whitehorse Utd	2	0	0	2	0	5	0
South Yarra	2	0	0	2	1	12	0
Brighton	2	0	0	2	0	12	0

Womens State League Div 1 Reserves

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Doncaster Rovers	2	2	0	0	17	0	6
Bundoora Utd	2	2	0	0	16	1	6
South Springvale	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Uni. of Melbourne	2	1	0	1	6	5	3
Whitehorse Utd	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Bayswater Strikers	2	1	0	1	3	7	3
Monbulk	2	0	1	1	3	5	1
Brighton	2	0	1	1	3	8	1
Ballarat Lady Devils	2	0	0	2	2	5	0
South Yarra	2	0	0	2	0	22	0

Womens State League Div 2 North-West

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Cairnlea	2	2	0	0	11	3	6
Western Eagles	2	2	0	0	9	2	6
La Trobe University	2	2	0	0	5	3	6
FC Bulleen Lions	1	1	0	0	6	0	3
Fawkner	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
Western Suburbs	2	1	0	1	4	7	3
Darebin Falcons	2	0	0	2	3	5	0
North Geelong Warriors	2	0	0	2	3	6	0
Whittlesea Ranges	2	0	0	2	2	10	0
Melbourne Bears	2	0	0	2	0	8	0

Womens State League Div 2 South-East

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Albert Park	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
Sandringham	2	1	1	0	5	0	4
North Caulfield	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
Southern Suburbs	2	1	0	1	5	5	3
Mornington	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
Noble Park	2	1	0	1	2	6	3
Monash University	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
Mooroolbark	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
Ashburton	2	0	1	1	0	4	1
Berwick City	2	0	0	2	2	4	0

Womens State League Div 3 North-West

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Keilor Park	2	2	0	0	11	4	6
Sunshine Georgies	2	2	0	0	8	1	6
Yarra Jets	2	2	0	0	7	3	6
Eltham Redbacks	2	1	1	0	6	1	4
Kyneton District	2	1	0	1	6	5	3
Brunswick Zebras	2	1	0	1	5	5	3
Diamond Valley Utd	2	0	1	1	2	5	1
Old Carey	2	0	0	2	3	7	0
Maribyrnong Utd	2	0	0	2	3	10	0
Melton	2	0	0	2	1	11	0

Womens State League Div 3 South-East

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Langwarrin	2	2	0	0	16	3	6
Seaford Utd	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
Box Hill Inter	2	1	0	1	10	4	3
Ashburton	2	1	0	1	10	6	3
Knox City	2	1	0	1	7	4	3
Endeavour Utd	2	1	0	1	7	6	3
Croydon City Arrows	2	1	0	1	3	5	3
South Melbourne	2	1	0	1	4	10	3
East Bentleigh	2	0	0	2	2	13	0
Beaumaris	2	0	0	2	5	17	0

Womens Metropolitan League North-West

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Brunswick City	2	2	0	0	19	2	6
Plenty Valley Lions	2	2	0	0	8	4	6
Fitzroy City	2	1	1	0	6	0	4
Melbourne Knights	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Tullamarine Jets	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Mitchell Rangers	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Brunswick Zebras	2	1	0	1	4	9	3
Northern Roosters	2	0	0	2	1	6	0
Yarra Jets	2	0	0	2	3	12	0
Watsonia Heights	2	0	0	2	1	13	0

Womens Metropolitan League South-East

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Berwick City	2	2	0	0	6	3	6
Sandringham	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Mooroolbark	1	1	0	0	4	0	3
Endeavour Hills	2	1	0	1	5	2	3
Kingston City	1	1	0	0	4	1	3
Dandenong City	2	1	0	1	6	6	3
Skye Utd	2	0	1	1	1	5	1
Monash University	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Croydon City Arrows	2	0	0	2	3	7	0
Eltham Redbacks	1	0	0	1	0	5	0

Womens Metropolitan League Central

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Sydenham Park	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Monash University	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Port Melbourne	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Bayside Argonauts	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Sandringham	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Uni. of Melbourne	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Albert Park	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Whittlesea Zebras	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Swinburne University WSC	2	0	1	1	1	6	1
Elwood City	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

Mens Thirds League Div 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
South Yarra	2	2	0	0	17	1	6
Altona Lions	2	2	0	0	5	2	6
Cleeland Utd	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Juventus Old Boys	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Doveton	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Kyneton District	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Southern Suburbs	2	0	1	1	3	5	1
Marcellin Old Collegians	1	0	0	1	0	3	0
Monash University	2	0	0	2	1	9	0
La Trobe University	1	0	0	1	1	11	0

Mens Thirds League Div 2 North-Wes

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
La Trobe University	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Brunswick City	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Collingwood City	1	1	0	0	8	1	3
Moreland City	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Glenroy	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Melbourne University	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Mitchell Rangers	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Upfield	2	0	1	1	2	5	1
Keilor Park	2	0	0	2	3	6	0
Essendon Utd	2	0	0	2	1	11	0

Mens Thirds League Div 2 South-Eas

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
South Yarra	2	2	0	0	8	2	6
Old Melburnians	2	2	0	0	7	3	6
Caulfield Grammarians	2	2	0	0	6	3	6
Bayside Argonauts	2	1	0	1	5	3	3
Boroondara Eagles	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Berwick City	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
Central Park AC Malvern	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Old Scotch	2	0	0	2	2	5	0
Nunawading City FC	1	0	0	1	1	5	0
Old Camberwell Grammar	2	0	0	2	2	7	0

Mens Thirds League Div 3 North-Wes

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Plenty Valley Lions	2	2	0	0	8	5	6
Werribee City	2	1	1	0	10	4	4
Uni. of Melbourne	2	1	1	0	8	2	4
Melbourne Lions	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Northcote City	2	1	0	1	10	9	3
Lalor	2	1	0	1	5	7	3
Kyneton District	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Hoppers Crossing	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Melton	1	0	0	1	2	8	0
La Trobe University	2	0	0	2	1	8	0

Debutante's Goal lifts Thunder and sinks City

NORTHCOTE CITY	0
DANDENONG THUNDER	1

Match Details:

Northcote City
Theodoridis- Petropoulos, C., Chiappetta, A., Papadopouls, G.(Tzoulis, N. 81') Kinigopoulos, H., D'Agostino (Jankovski, A. 78'), H., Norton, B., Soares, E., Savio, P., Curtis, N., Kalifatidis, J.(Turer, A. 69'), Voulgaris, J.

Cards: Norton (Y)

Dandenong Thunder:
Webster, S., Enes, S., Osman, L., Bahnsen, N., Bright, J, Davidson, R., Rexhepi, S., Bulloch, S., (Bourakis, A. 67'). Dilorio, J., Korcari, V. (Abazi, M. 60'), Ibraimi, I. (Ukalovski, D. 60'),

Scorer: Abazi (73')

Man of the Match:
S. Rexhepi (Thunder)

By George Stogiannou

A glancing header to teenage Thunder substitute Murat Abazi, secured three valuable points for his struggling team in a keenly contested 1-0 away win over Northcote City on Saturday.

Both sides desperately needed the win, which made for an open attacking match. The first half produced a number of clear cut chances to both sides. The visitors settled first with midfielders Ryan Davidson and Scott Bulloch narrowly missing one- on –one scoring opportunities with the keeper, in the opening quarter of an hour. The bug soon spread to the home team with strikers James Kalifatidis and Jonathan Voulgaris also missing excellent chances with just the keeper to beat.

As the half progressed, the home team's pace advantage up front began to tell, with Voulgaris causing problems drifting out wide. On the stroke of half time, Thunder keeper Stuart Webster saved a fiery Brad Norton free kick.

After the break, the home team continued to stretch the visitors, putting them onto the back foot. Thunder defender Lev Osman was in the thick of it, providing a desperate last ditch tackle to foil Norton from close range. Osman was fortunate not to be penalised when he stopped a flying Kalifatidis from overtaking him as the last man. The referee ignored the Northcote players' appeal for a foul.

With the visitors struggling to make any headway in attack against a solid City defence, subs Abazi and Denis Ukalovski entered the match to inject some needed pace and movement up front.

In the 73rd minute against the general run of play, Thunder's Joe DiIorio crossed from the right flank deep into the box where the ball seemed to narrowly clear young Abazi surrounded by taller defenders inside the six yard box. The ball snuck inside City keeper Chris Theodoridis- Petropoulos's far post. with Abazi claiming the goal from a glancing header, much to the delight of the Thunder faithful.

The goal gave Thunder the spur it needed to hold off a fast finishing Northcote in the final stages of the match.

Afterwards, a disappointed Northcote coach Peter Tsolakis commented, "Another 1-0 defeat to a really soft goal, that's three in a row for us. We created a few good chances which we should have put away. We had two pretty much, clear cut penalty decisions go against us, but just one lapse of concentration and you get punished at this level. Second half I thought we were the better team. We dictated terms, but you can't concede soft goals like that. We've got players coming back will hopefully be able to convert the chances we create."

A relieved Thunder coach Stuart Munro said after the game, " The win is very important for the whole club really. After last week's second half performance where we really just died a death and were absolutely terrible, to come out and get a win, no matter how we got it was so important for the team.

Our strikers haven't been scoring all year. To throw on young Murat for his first game for the club and he scores a goal, that's a little spark for us."

" There are players out there who have lost confidence, and will regain their confidence at some point. And it's going to take performances like that today for it to happen. Roll their sleeves up, sometimes it's not going to be pretty. We had a little bit off luck today which we haven't had in previous weeks."

Dandenong Thunder keeper Stuart Webster comes out from his line to punch the danger clear from the threat of a Northcote City attack. PHOTO: PETER PSARROS

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Knights surge with top five in sight

ALTONA MAGIC 0

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2

Match Details:

Melbourne Knights
1. Antony Loncaric, 2. Ryan Filipovic, 4. Ben Surey, 5. Bryan Bran, 7. Liam Cannell, 8. Josip Magdic, 11. Kevin Townson, 12. Adrian Zahra (15. Anthony Colosimo 80'), 13. Thomas Skara, 14. Jean-Charles Dubois (16. Jacob Colosimo 73'), 19. Gazmend Ajdini (10. Ivica Praiz 85').

Goals: Townson (67', 77')
Yellow cards: Bran, Skara, Dubois.

Altona
1.Tomislav Tomic, 4. Alex Koltovski, 6. Kole Delev, 7. Dejan Radojicic, 10. Pece Siveski, 14. Pece Cergovski, 11. Mathew Theodore, 16. James Duvcevski (8. Jurica Siljanovski 46'), 18. Tony Saric (9. Koce Delev 9'), 19. Slave Bozinovski, 21. Sime Kovacevic.

Yellow cards: Bozinovski.

By Luke Sheehan

MELBOURNE Knights secured its second consecutive away win on ANZAC Day with a 2-0 victory over Altona Magic at Paisley Park Soccer Complex.

Kevin Townson scored a brace in a superb ten-minute streak, but the striker had been threatening all day prior to his 67th and 77th minute strikes.

Jean-Charles Dubois teed up Townson for his first goal of the day, which turned out to be an easy tap in for Townson after the Magic got caught on the break.

Townson went alone for his second goal, dancing past three Magic defenders and the goalkeeper to send the traveling Knights fans into raptures.

Knights coach Ivan Duzel said he was satisfied by his side's hunger to win after last week's loss to South Melbourne.

"After the disappointing game last week against Hellas where we should have got a draw, today was a special second half to show we are a good team and an attacking team.

"We wanted to win, and brilliant goal by Kevin, the second one excellent."

It rained from midway through the first half to the main break, creating slippery conditions and making slick passes a rare commodity.

But Duzel said his side switched on in the second stanza, lifting its pass rate and breaking the game open.

"First half, we wanted to play our system but unfortunately they come too defensive. They had too many numbers in the 16-yard box, and we didn't break to the wings.

"Second half we tried to open it. In the first half our passes came too late, in the second half our passes came a little bit quicker. And when you open the game, you'll have two or three fast players and that's what happened with both goals. It could have been more but I'm happy with two. "

Altona captain Pece Siveski was disappointed with the Magic's lacklustre performance.

"The Melbourne Knights fully deserved the points. They outplayed us, and we were a little bit flat today. Not sure why, (whether it was) heavy ground, hard work on the training track, but we were way below par and a couple of injuries in the first half didn't help.

"We were battling, so two or three players were playing in the 11 that weren't 100 per cent fit and as the game goes on, you feel that."

The Magic's scoring fortunes have come in patches this season, with one goal in the opening four games, before breaking through and scoring six in the next three.

But Siveski said Sunday's performance lacked creativity in front of goal.

"If we knew the secret, we'd be scoring goals. I guess we didn't create too many opportunities, and we didn't get a sniff today to be honest. I'm pretty disappointed."

This week, Altona take on Hume City at Broadmeadows Valley Park on Sunday at 3pm, while Melbourne host Bentleigh at Knights Stadium on Sunday at 3pm.

Kevin Townson gets the accolades after scoring a brace. PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS

Altona's Pece Siveski gets his foot on the ball amidst the midfireld battle. PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS

The Melbourne Knights are happy campers after securing consecutive away wins and their eyes firmly fixed on a top five spot. PHOTO: ANITA MILAS

Melbourne Knights Championship Reunion
Sunday May 16th 2010
Knights Stadium
2 Somers St. North Sunshine
2pm - Melbourne Knights Youth vs. Green Gully Youth
4pm - Melbourne Knights vs. Green Gully (VPL Game)
6:30pm 1994/95 Champions Squad
Coached by Mirko Bazic
vs. 1995/96 Champions Squad
Coached by Ian Dobson

Melbourne Knights Championship Reunion
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GREEN GULLY	0
SUNSHINE GEORGIES	1

A goal worthy to win any game

Match Details:

Green Gully line up: Nikola Ragonovic, Daniel Jones, Steven Burton, Jeff Fleming, Josh, Groenwald, Graham Hockless, Ryan Ollerton (Matt Sanders 52), Mile Medjedovic, Andy Vargas, Jonathon Munoz (Michael Anderson 89). Subs: Nicholas Robinson, Cameron Drake, Kyriako Gerohristodoulou.

Sunshine George Cross line up: Martin John, Matthew Cini, David Calleja, Barry Devlin, Dougal Cameron, Fidell Richards, Evan Christodoulou, Kyle Joryeff, Andrew Nabbout (Ben Cogger 82), James Blackburn (George Papadopoulous 73), Steve Beck. Subs: Tyrone Demetriou, Daniel Sweney, Cameron Salik.

By Gordon Bennett

A sensational strike from 25 meters by Kyle Joryeff gave Sunshine George Cross a much needed 3 points over bitter rival Green Gully at Tom Flood Reserve in Bendigo.

The all important and sensational goal scored in the 63rd minute gave the Georgies a much boost after last week's defeat at Richmond.

The Georgies deserved the win as they were the more adventurous team throughout the game against a flat Green Gully side. The red & whites were first to attack after a good run by Fidell Richards who set up Evan Christodoulou with the first shot on goal that forced Gully keeper Nikola Roganovic into a diving save. From a short corner by Douglas Cameron, Kyle Joryeff saw his long range shot go just over the cross-bar. Green Gully found it hard getting any rhythm going forward and their long range kicks being dealt with easily by Georgies centre backs Barry Devlin and David Calleja.

Gully's first attempt on goal came after 32 minutes when Gary Wales sent in a cross from the left that Joshua Groenwald headed well over the bar. The Georgies response came quick with Andrew Nabbout getting the better of Mile Medjedovic forcing Roganovic into making another diving save.

Green Gully's threats came from long throw-ins by Graham Hockless and well taken free kicks by Andy Vargas, that Georgie keeper Martin John dealt with easily.

The Sunshine keeper was finally called into action after 37 minutes when a well flighted free kick by Andy Vargas deflected of David Calleja's head and looked goal bound.

Martin John acrobatically tipped the ball over the cross-bar. Immediately after the break Green Gully's defence looked uneasy in dealing with a long defensive clearance by Sunshine that went narrowly past the upright for a corner kick.

The Georgies sensed they could get the win from this game and increased their work rate. Fidell Richards and Evan Christodoulou were winning plenty of possession and driving forward at every opportunity. A pass to Steven Beck from Christodoulou, saw the tiny Georgie midfielder fouled some 25 metres from goal.

It looked like Andrew Nabbout was about to try his luck, but the youngster just played the ball one metre to his right and Joryeff with no run up, shot in to the roof of the net for one of the goals of the season.

The Georgies were on top with Andrew Nabbout making a lot of room for himself and forcing Ragonovic into a diving save. At the other end Martin John made a good save from a long range Gary Wales shot.

The Georgies could have made the game safe at the 84th minute mark when Kyle Joryeff waltzed past the Gully defence and cut the ball to the on rushing Christodoulou. The Georgie youngster looked odds on to score from 3 metres but he over stepped the ball, much to the relief of Green Gully defenders. Gully raised their game over the closing stages and went all out in search of an equaliser.

Despite seven minutes of injury time, Gully could not find a way past the Sunshine George Cross defence who managed to hold on to record a fine win.

Georgie coach Andy O'Dell after match comments: Fantastic win in the local derby, it's all about results. It was a tremendous effort from the boys after a tough week. We have been questioned over the week whether we are going to stay in the League.

Tonight it proved to me that we got a powerful strong squad with lots of character and lots of hunger. I am absolutely delighted today.

Green Gully's coach Paul Harris after match comments: Very disappointed with the result from the club's prospective. I know what it means in this local derby against Sunshine George Cross, there's not much to add it was a wonder strike that separated the two sides at the end of the day.

The boy hit it from 30 yards to corner, you can't ask for more than that.

Green Gully and Sunshine georgies players observe a minutes silence for Anzac before their derby game yesterday in Bendigo. PHOTO: GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS

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South hit Hume for six

HUME CITY

0

SOUTH MELBOURNE

6

Match Details:

Hume City:
Lupce Acevski, Fabio Dilizia, Steven Pace, Isiyan Erdogan, Alponso Opazo, Turhan Sumbul, Richard Cardozo, Goran Talevski, Tansel Baser, Dusko Delic, Michael Bosevski

Subs: Mehmet Karakilic, Serdar Pir, Marijo Roza, Ersin Kaya, Sam Dehaini

South Melbourne:
Peter Zois, Steve O'Dor (Stiven Mrkela 85'), Daniel Vasilevaski, Eddie Cetkin, Carl Recchia (Joseph Youssef 75'), Sam Torrens, Rama Tavsancioglu, Fernando De Moraes, Sebastian Petrovic (Yusuf Yusuf 68'), Gianni De Nittis, Joe Keenan

Goals: Fernando De Moraes 35', Gianni De Nittis 42', 43', 53', 88', Daniel Vasilevski 74')

Man of the Match:
Gianni De Nittis (SMFC)

Venue: Broadmeadows Valley Park
Date: Sunday 25th April 2010
Crowd: 700

By John Kyrou

South Melbourne FC has produced its best performance of the season by destroying fellow top four side Hume City 6-0 in the ANZAC Day clash at Broadmeadows Valley Park. Gianni De Nittis scored four of South's goals, joining an elite list of only nine players to have ever achieved that milestone for the club.

South travelled to Hume keen on putting in a good performance to back up from the win over the Melbourne Knights and with hard games against Richmond and Oakleigh to come. Hume were keen on preventing this following their 1-3 home loss to Oakleigh last week.

Fernando De Moraes opened the scoring for the away side in the 35th minute, slotting the ball to the right of Hume keeper Lupce Acevski after being put through. Just before halftime De Nittis ended the match as a contest when he scored twice in a minute to give South a 3-0 lead at the break. His first goal was a tap-in at the back post after a cut-back by Keenan on the right side. From the restart, South gained possession and put De Nittis one-on-one with Acevski. Despite having his shirt tugged by the Hume defence, De Nittis kept his feet and coolly slotted past the Hume custodian.

De Nittis had his hat-trick shortly after the halftime break, converting another easy tap-in opportunity, after some excellent lead-up play by Daniel Vasilevski and De Moraes culminated in the ball being played across the goal to the waiting striker. Vasilevski then scored a contender for VPL Goal of the Year with a stunning free kick from outside the area that gave Acevski no chance. De Nittis then scored his fourth and South's sixth with another tap-in following another ball played across the goal by De Moraes.

After the match, captain Rama Tavsancioglu accepted the ANZAC Day Cup as De Nittis was awarded the Man of the Match award. South has now won both ANZAC Day Cup contests following the 2-1 triumph over Hume in 2009.

South Melbourne FC faces another tough assignment next week with a trip to Kevin Bartlett Reserve for a meeting with Richmond. Kick-off is at 8:30pm on Friday night. Hume hosts Altona Magic on Sunday at 3pm.

Anzac Day tribute ... Gianni De Nittis salutes the crowd after scoring his hat-trick. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

South snuffs out the danger, with keeper Peter Zois and captain Ram Tavsancioglu (14) in starring roles. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

OAKLEIGH CANNONS

RICHMOND EAGLES

Tonight's squads:

Oakleigh
1. Sohail FORYABEE
2. Jamie CUMMING
5. John FITZGERALD
6. Stelios DRAKOS
7. Ljuban PALINIC
8. Bonnell OBRADOVIC
10. Ricky DIACO
13. Bill DAMIANOS
14. Jerry KARPEH
16. Dean PANAGOPOULOS
17. Cameron WATSON
18. Michael CURCIJA
20. Aristidis DRAKOS
21. Neven ANTIC
23. Nick KALMAR
25. Scott WEBSTER
30. Griffin MCMASTER
35. Scott AGUSTIN

Richmond
1. Stjepan GAL
2. Andrew VIOLA
3. Erhan KARAHAN
5. Stefan PIORKOWSKI
6. Dimitri TSIARAS
7. Jesse KRNCEVIC
8. Alexander TABOR
9. Milos LUJIC
10. Daniel VISEVIC
11. David SCULLION
12. Tomislav USKOK
13. Antun KOVACIC
14. Michael CATALANO
15. Liam RYAN
16. Tomislav MILARDOVIC
17. Peter SAWAN
19. Davey VAN 'T SCHIP
22. Robert SIMEONI
24. Evan BATSIS

Top spot up for grabs on Anzac Day

By Mark Boric

The Anzac Day Public Holiday VPL fixture sees league leaders Oakleigh Cannons host third-placed Richmond at Jack Edwards Reserve. Both sides enter the game coming off wins, Oakleigh defeating Hume City in a top of the table clash, whilst the Eagles defeated Sunshine Georgies 2-0.

Four in-form strikers could feature in the game, with Richmond fielding the league's equal top goalscorer Daniel Visevic (5 goals in 7 games) as well as Jesse Krncevic (4 goals in 5 games). Both have scored against Oakleigh in the past. For the Cannons Jerry Karpeh (4 goals in 7 games) and Michael Curcija (3 goals in 7 games) have led the line in 2010.

An excellent disciplinary record, with no player having picked up more than two yellow cards for the season, leaves John Anastasiadis with all of his squad available to play, barring injuries. Richmond will be without captain Dimitri Tsiaras after his sending-off last week

While Oakleigh have no players in their squad who have played for Richmond, the Eagles have three former Cannons in Antun Kovacic, Milos Lujic and Peter Sawan. Richmond coach Michael Chatzitrifonos is also a former Cannons boss, having led them to the State League Division One Championship in 2003.

In 17 meetings since 1993, Oakleigh and Richmond have drawn 4 times, with Richmond winning on 5 occasions and Oakleigh notching 7 wins. Oakleigh hold a 24-22 lead in goals. More recently this evening's fixture has ended in 1-1 draws in the last two outings. Interestingly all 4 draws between the sides have been 1-1 affairs. The last Richmond win at Oakleigh was way back in April 1993, when they won 2-1.

Oakleigh's Bil Damianos scores in the equivalent fixture last year against Richmond.
PHOTO: PETER KAKALIAS

Another close encounter should be on the cards. Please note that the kick-off time has been ammended since the original fixtures were issued, and the game will now commence at 5.30 p.m.

The Under 21 game will kick off at 3.30pm.

VPL 2010 | Round 8 | Errea Scoreboard

goalweekly.com

VPL Standings Round 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
South Melbourne	8	4	3	1	16	9	15
Oakleigh Cannons	7	4	2	1	12	8	14
Hume City	8	5	1	2	15	14	13
Richmond	7	4	1	2	12	9	13
Bentleigh Greens	7	3	2	2	8	7	11
Sunshine Georgies	8	3	2	3	9	11	11
Green Gully Cavaliers	8	3	0	5	11	12	9
Melbourne Knights	8	3	2	3	13	11	8
Northcote City	8	2	1	5	8	10	7
Altona Magic	8	1	4	3	7	9	7
Dandenong Thunder	8	2	1	5	5	15	7
Heidelberg Utd	7	1	3	3	13	14	3

VPL Round 9

Oakleigh Cannons v Sunshine Georgies
Jack Edwards Reserve
Fri 30 Apr KO 8:30PM

Richmond v South Melbourne
Kevin Bartlett Reserve
Fri 30 Apr KO 8:30PM

Hume City v Altona Magic
Broadmeadows Valley Park
Sun 2 May KO 3:00PM

Dandenong Thunder v Green Gully
George Andrews Reserve
Sat 1 May KO 7:00PM

Heidelberg Utd v Northcote City
Olympic Village
Sun 2 May KO 5:00PM

Melbourne Knights v Bentleigh Greens
Knights Stadium
Sun 2 May KO 3:00PM

N.T.C v Richmond
Kevin Bartlett Reserve
Mon 3 May KO 8:30PM

VPL Under 21s

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pt
South Melbourne	9	6	2	1	19	13	20	
Oakleigh Cannons	7	5	1	1	21	10	16	
N.T.C	8	4	3	1	29	14	15	
Richmond	7	5	0	2	19	11	15	
Bentleigh Greens	8	5	0	3	18	13	15	
Northcote City	9	4	2	3	25	20	14	
Sunshine Georgies	8	3	1	4	14	14	10	
Green Gully Cavaliers	9	2	2	5	11	29	8	
Heidelberg Utd	7	3	1	3	12	12	7	
Hume City	8	2	3	3	15	16	6	
Dandenong Thunder	8	1	3	4	9	21	6	
Melbourne Knights	7	1	2	4	7	11	2	
Altona Magic	9	0	2	7	5	20	2	

Bentleigh Greens Heidelberg Utd , Northcote City 4 Dandenong Thunder 1, Green Gully Cavaliers 2 Sunshine Georgies 1, Altona Magic 0 Melbourne Knights 1, Hume City 1 South Melbourne 2

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